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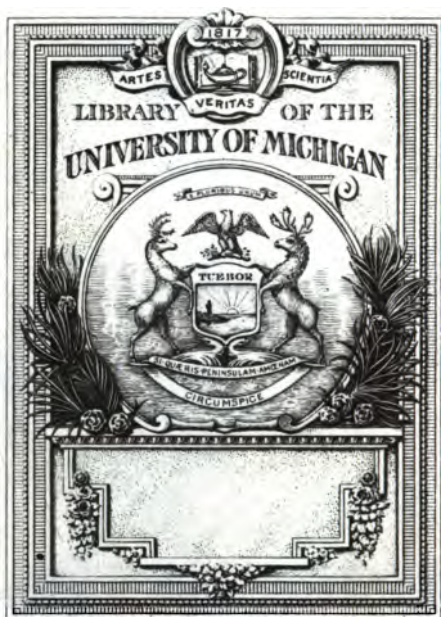
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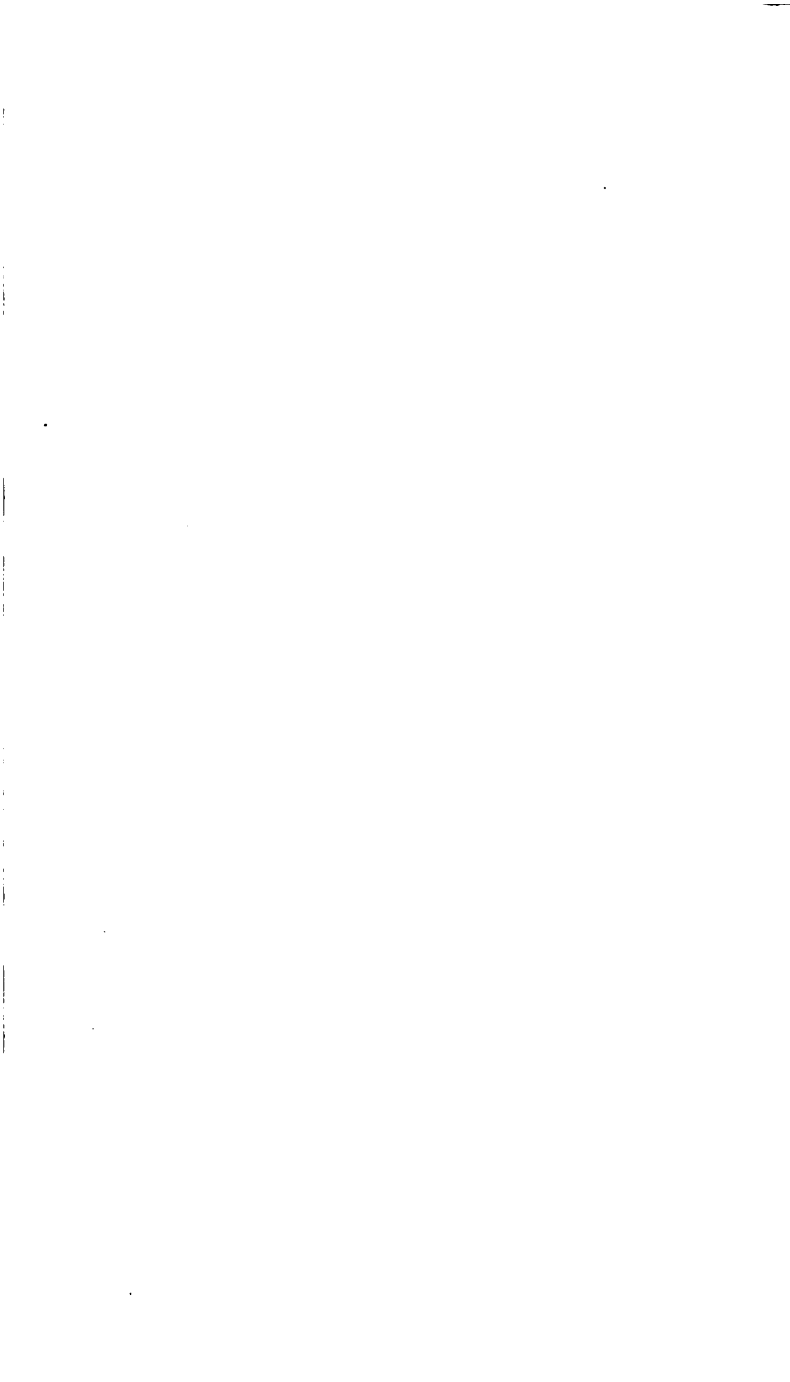
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“ HOLLAND - TIDE ; ”

OR,

MUNSTER POPULAR TALES.

“ Now let it rain potatoes ! ”

: : : : *Merry Wives of Windsor.*

LONDON :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following TALES are the result of some notes made during a residence of several years in a part of Ireland but little visited by writers, whose acknowledged abilities might enable them to turn the abundant material, which it everywhere presents, to better advantage. Whatever be the opinion formed of his book, the writer will feel little disappointment, provided it has the effect of leading abler hands to the accomplishment of a task but slightly attempted by him.

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Page 57, line 13, for Aylmer, read Fitzmaurice.

“ HOLLAND-TIDE.”

Straw for your gentillesse! quod our hoste—
What, Frankeline! Parde, Sire, wel thou wost
That eche of you mote tellen at the lest
A Tale er two, or breken his behest.

CHAUCER.

“ HOLLAND-TIDE.”

“ HOLLAND-TIDE,” “All-Hollands,” “Hollands-Eve,” or November-Eve, was once a merrier time in Ireland than it is at present, though even still its customary enjoyments are by no means neglected. Fortunately for “all the Saints,” in whose honour the feast is celebrated, it occurs at a season of the year when the pressure of want is less sensibly felt than at most others, and, among a people who are, generally speaking, perhaps too easily satisfied as to the external comforts of life, a comparative alleviation of suffering is hailed with as hearty a welcome as if it were a positive acquisition of happiness. The peasant sees, at this period at least, the assurance of present abundance around him. He beholds a vast extent of land all cultivated, and burthened with the treasured produce of

the soil—gardens of stubble covered with *shocks* of wheat, oats, and barley, which look just as if they were intended to make bread for him and his neighbours—fields of potatoes, some, in which the numerous earthen mounds, or *pits*,* have been already raised ; others, in which the first nipping frost that is borne on the November blast has embrowned the stalks, and withered the leaves upon their stem. The stroke of the flail, and the clack of the water-mill are in his ear—the meadow-land is green and fresh with its after-grass—and the *haggart*, or hay-yard, is stacked into a labyrinth with hay and corn. He is satisfied with the appearance of things about him—he thinks he has no business asking himself whether any of these good things are destined for his use, or for that of a foreign mechanic—he never stops to anticipate in fancy, while he puts the spade for the first time into his own little half acre, and discloses the fair produce of his labour, how many calls from

* There is a curious inversion of signification in the words *pit*, *ditch*, and *dyke*, in the sister isle. A potato *pit* is an *elevated* mound of earth, containing potatoes. A *ditch* is a dyke, and a dyke means a ditch.

tithe-proctor, assessed tax-gatherer, landlord, priest, &c. may yet diminish his little store—he sees the potatoes, they are his and his pig's by right, and he and his pig are merry fellows while they last, and while they can procure a turfen fire, or the smoke of a fire, to warm the little cabin about them.

Or, if this last comfort is denied him, he can take his stick, and his "God save all here," along with him, and make the best of his way into the spacious kitchen of the neighbouring "strong farmer," "middle-man," "small gentleman," or "half-sir," when the festal evening abovementioned has arrived. Here he can take his place among the revellers, and pay for his warm seat in the chimney-corner by a joke, a laugh, a tale, a gibe, a magic sleight, a form of conjuration proper to the time—in short, by adding his subscription of merriment to the general fun of the meeting.

Just such a quiet, contented, droll fellow, formed one of a most frolick November-Eve party, at the house of a respectable farmer in the west of Munster, upon whose hospitality chance threw the collector of these stories, on

the 31st of last October. The earthen floor had been swept as clean as a new pin; the two elderly rulers of the mansion were placed side by side in two venerable, high-backed, carved wooden chairs, near a blazing turf fire; their daughter, a bright-haired Munster lass (and Munster is as remarkable for fair faces, in Ireland, as Lancashire in the neighbouring country), all alive with spirit and jocund health (that dearest dower of beauty), was placed opposite, contending with, and far overmatching the wits of two rustic beaus, the one the assistant of the village apothecary, the other (the more favoured of the two), a wild, noisy, rude, red-faced savage, son to the agent at the "great house," as the mother gave me to understand in a whisper. The school-master, the seneschal, half a dozen neighbours, and a few shy-looking, rosy-cheeked girls, looking forward with most unchristian anxiety and credulity to the cabalistic ceremonies of the evening, and anxiously longing for the retirement of the scrupulous old couple, whose presence alone prevented their being immediately put in train, in defiance of Father Maney and his penances, filled up the remainder

of the scene immediately around the fire—while Paddy, the *gorsoon*, and the two maid-servants, sat whispering together in respectful distance, seated in shade upon the settle-bed, at the upper end of the apartment.

Previous to the commencement of the evening sports, the jolly-looking fellow in the corner before mentioned, throwing himself back on his *sugan* chair, stretching out his unstockinged, polished, and marbly legs, variegated by the cherishing influence of many a warm fireside, snapped his fingers, and made glad the heart of his ancient host, by leading out the famous old chorus :—

I.

" I love ten-pence, jolly, jolly ten-pence ;
I love ten-pence better than my life ;
I spent a penny of it,
I lent a penny of it,
I took eight-pence home to my wife.

II.

I love eight-pence, jolly, jolly eight-pence,
I love eight-pence better than my life ;
I spent a penny of it,
I lent a penny of it,
I took six-pence home to my wife.

III.

I love six-pence, &c. &c.

and so forth, to

I love two-pence, jolly, jolly two-pence,

I love two-pence better than my life ;

I spent a penny of it,

I lent a penny of it,

I took NOTHING home to my wife !"

The chorus having died away in a most musical discord, a clear space was made in the midst, and a fat-faced little urchin, clambering up on the back of one of the high chairs, lowered from the roof a sort of apparatus made of two laths crossed, and suspended from one of the bacon-hooks above by a whip-cord, fastened from the centre. A large bag of apples was now brought forward from the corner of the room, and two of the sleekest and largest affixed to the extremities of one of the cross-sticks, while the other was furnished with two short bits of candle, lighted. When the balance was fairly adjusted, and the whole machine lowered to the level of the mouths of the guests, it was sent twirling round with a touch of the finger ; the fun being now, to see who would fix his or

her teeth in the immense apple, while in rapid motion, and avoid taking, instead, the unwelcome inch of lighted candle, which appeared to be whisking round in pursuit.

"E'then, bad manners to you, Norry Foley," said the merry fellow with the legs before mentioned, addressing himself to a modest, blue-eyed, simpering maiden, who advanced in her turn to the "snap-apple," with a sly coquettish management of lip and eye, "only mark what a weeny dawny little mouth she makes at it, because the gintlemin is looking at her now, all o' one I hadn't seen her meself many's the time make no more than the one offer at a white-eye that would make two of that apple."

And, as if to demonstrate the facility of the undertaking, he advanced in his turn with an easy, careless, swaggering confidence in his own prowess, and a certain ominous working of his immense jaws, which struck awe into the hearts of the junior spectators. The orifice which was displayed when he expanded them, banished the faintest glimmering of hope; and when they closed, with a hollow sound, upon the devoted fruit, a general groan announced that the sports

and chances of "snap-apple" for that evening were at an end.

Next followed the floating apple, of still greater dimensions than the former, placed in a tub of clear water, and destined to become the property of him who should, fairly between his teeth, and without help from hands, or the side of the vessel, lift it out of the fluid. This created most uproarious mirth for some time, until the man with the legs, in his own quiet, silent way, stalked among the disputants like the genius of fate, and picking it off the surface as if it had been a walnut, retired to his corner, followed by the wondering and envious glances of the gaping juniors.

While these things were transacted above, another group about the fire were occupied more interestingly, though not so merrily, in melting the lead through the handle of a key placed over a *porringer* of water, and conjecturing from the fantastical shapes which the metal assumed, their own future destiny; in burning the beans,* (in which process, much to the dis-

* Such is the demand for those articles "coming on" November-Eve, that rural speculators sow bean gardens for the purpose of profiting by the occasion.

satisfaction of the young hostess and her noisy sweetheart, the village apothecary's lad was observed to burn quietly by her side, while the former bounced away with a "pop!" like a shot,) and other innocent and permitted arts of the Ephesian letter. These little minor tricks, however, were but child's play to the great girls, who were on thorns until the field should be left clear to themselves—when they might put in practice the darker and more daring ceremonies proper to the time—the drying of the shift sleeve on the three-legged stool, and watching in the silence of the midnight for the shadowy resemblance of the future spouse, who was to turn it before the fire; the sowing of hemp or rape-seed, the adjuration with a sage-leaf, and all the gloomy and forbidden mysteries of the night, into which we shall not at present penetrate; these ceremonies not being peculiar or strictly national, and having already found admirable historians in the authors of "Halloween," and of "The Boyne Water."

After the company had wearied their spirits and memories in search of new matter of amusement, and exhausted all the accustomed festivi-

ties of the evening, the loudness of their merriment began to die away, and a drowsiness crept upon their laughter and conversation. As the noisier revellers grew comparatively silent, the voices of two or three old gossips who sat inside the hearth in the chimney-corner, imbibing the grateful warmth, and seeming to breathe as freely and contentedly amid the volumes of smoke which enveloped them as if it had been pure aroma—their knees gathered up to their chins, and the tails of their cotton or stuff gowns drawn up over their heads, suffering the glazed blue or green petticoat to dazzle the eyes of the admiring spectators—the voices, as we have said, of these old crones became more audible as the noisy mirth around them began to decrease, and at length attracted the attention of the other guests.

"What is it ye're doing there?" exclaimed the old master of the house, looking towards the corner with an expression of face in which much real curiosity and some assumed ridicule were blended.

"Oyeh thin nothing in the world," replied a smoke-dried, crow-footed, white-haired, yet

sharp-eyed hag, whose three last teeth were employed in masticating a piece of "that vile roguish tobacco." "Nothing;—only we to be talking among ourselves of ould times—and things—the quare doings that used to be there long ago—

‘ Onst on a time
When pigs drank wine,
And turkeys smoked tobacco;’—

whin THEMSELVES used to be seen by the ould and the young, by day and night, roving the fields and places, and not to be scaming about as they do now, (maning 'em no disparagement), in a whisk of a dusty road on a windy day,—whin goold was as plenty as bog-dust, and there used to be joyants there as long as the round towers; whin it was the fashion for the girls to come coorting the boys, instead of the boys going after the girls, and things that way, entirely."

"Poh, what nonsense!" exclaimed the hero of the snap-apple, "there's not a word ever to be had out o' the ould women, passing a chronicle of a fable about the fairies, and priests, and joyants, and things that we never seen, nor

that nobody ever come back to tell us about—what kind they wor—or what truth was in 'em. Let somebody sit upright and tell us something that we'll know is it a lie that he's telling, or not."

" Something about wakes and weddings, and them things," said (a note above her breath) the modest, small mouthed Norry Foley.

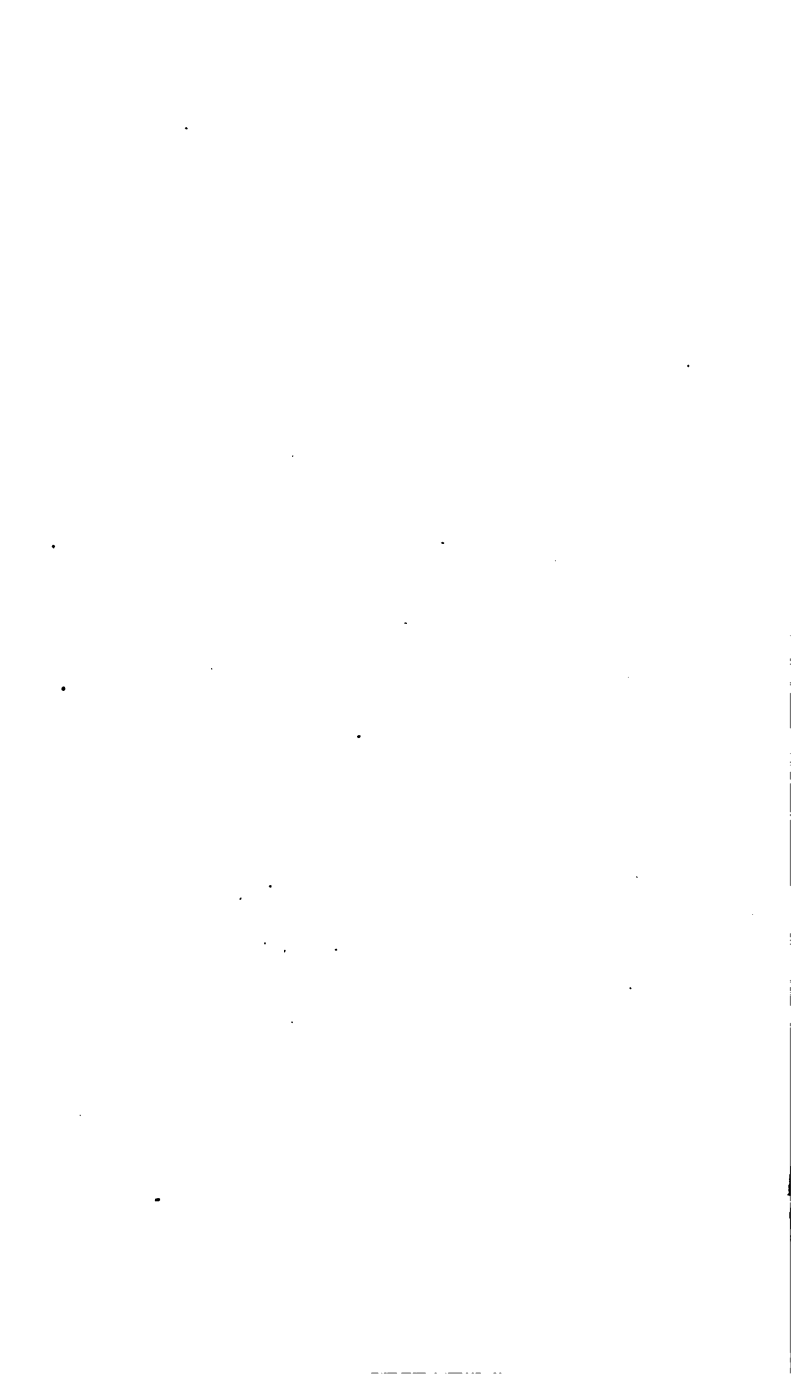
" Or smugglers, or coiners, or fighting at fairs, or Moll Doyle, or rebellion, or murthuring of one sort or another," roared he of the legs.

" Easy now—easy the whole o' ye!—easy again!" said the host, waving his hand around the circle to enjoin silence,—“ there may be a way found to please ye all;” (this was said with an air of good-natured condescension, as if the speaker, in his benevolence, were about to tolerate rather than enjoy the silly amusement which the youngsters meditated)—“ gather round the fire, do ye, and let every body tell his story after his own way; and let the rest hearken, whether they like it or not, until 'tis over, and then tell their own if they think 'tis better.”

A clattering of chairs and stools, and a general bustle announced the ready concurrence

of the company in this polite arrangement. In a short time all were hushed into a most flattering silence, and the following tales passed round the circle, lulling some to sleep, keeping others awake, each finding its particular number of indulgent, gratified, and attentive auditors, though no single one, perhaps, succeeded in pleasing all.

Whether such may be the lot of the narratives among a more extensive and less considerate audience, remains to be seen. Avowing the source from which his materials were taken, the collector thinks himself entitled to tell the stories after his own liking, only requesting the critical reader to keep the pretensions of the book in mind whenever its defects shall arouse the tiger, judgment, within his breast. It is not that we absolutely fear the beast, but we would have him reserve his royal ferocity for a worthier prey, which a little forbearance in this instance may induce us, ere long, to lay before him.



THE
AYLMERS OF BALLY-AYLMER.

With pleasure and amaze I stand transported !
What do I see ? Dead and alive at once !

Cato.



THE

AYLMERS OF BALLY-AYLMER.

“THE mountains! The Kerry hills! Alone by yourself, and at this time o’night!—Now, hear to me, will you, sir, for it’s a lonesome way you’re taking, and them mountains is the place for all manner of evil doings from the living and from the dead. Take this little bottle of holy water, and shake a little of it upon your forehead, when you step upon the heath. Walk on bold and straight before you, and if the dead night come upon you, which I hope no such thing will happen till you reach Tralee any way, you won’t whistle, don’t, for it is that calls ’em all about one if they do be there; you know who I mean, sir. If you chance to see or hear any thing bad, you have only to hold these beads up over your head and stoop under

it, and whatever it is, it must pass over the beads without doing you any harm. Moreover—”

“ Easy, easy, Mrs. Giltinaan, if you please. There is something of much more consequence to me than those fine instructions of yours. Don't mind telling me what I shall do in case I lose my way, until you have let me know first how I am to find it.”

“ Oh, then, why shouldn't I, and welcome, Mr. Ayler? listen to me and I'll tell you, only be careful and don't slight *themselves* for all.”

The above formed part of a conversation which took place between the hostess of an humble inn on the west border of the county of Limerick, and a young gentleman whose sharp accent and smart dress bespoke a recent acquaintance with Dublin-life at least. As he was a very handsome young fellow, and likely to fall into adventures, perhaps I may be excused for giving some account of him, and in order to do this the more fully and satisfactorily, I shall begin by telling who his father was.

Robert Ayler, Esq. of Bally-Ayler, was a private gentleman of real Milesian extraction,

residing near the west coast of Ireland. Like most of the gentry around him at that time, he did not scruple to add to his stock of worldly wealth, a portion of that which by legal right should have gone into his Majesty's exchequer. In a word, he meddled in the *running* trade on the coast, a circumstance not calculated at the period in question to attach any thing like opprobrium to the character of a gentleman and a real Milesian. Although he added considerably to his patrimony by this traffic, the expenses of the establishment at Bally-Aylmer were so creditable to the hospitality of its master, that he felt himself sinking rather than rising in the world, and was, indeed, on the eve of ruin, or more properly of an ejectment, when a desperate resource presented itself in the form of a smuggling enterprize, so daring in its nature that none but a Milesian would have even dreamt of putting it in execution. He formed this project, as he had done many others, in conjunction with an old friend and neighbour, Mr. Cahill Fitzmaurice, or, as he was called by the smugglers, from his hardness and cruelty, Cahill-crui-dharug, (Cahill of the red hand), a

name, however, which like many other nicknames, was but little appropriate, for Mr. Fitzmaurice was known to mingle much humanity with his enterprize. Those two friends undertook the affair together, succeeded with an ease which they hardly anticipated, and realized a sum of money more than sufficient to have tempted them into danger still more imminent. Gratifying as was his success so far however, this enterprize was of fatal consequence to Mr. Aylmer. Having embarked with his friend on board a Galway hooker, (a kind of vessel used for carrying fish or turf along the coast and up the Shannon), for the mouth of the river, they happened to engage in a dispute on some trivial occasion or other, which, nevertheless, was made up between them with little difficulty. On the same night however, a very dark one, as the little vessel was *putting about* in a hard gale, a stamping of feet and struggling was heard on the forecastle, and immediately afterwards a heavy plash on the lee bow. Running forward to ascertain the cause, the boatmen found that Mr. Aylmer had fallen overboard, and Fitzmaurice was observed standing near the

lee gunwale, and holding by the fluke of the anchor, apparently under the influence of strong agitation. He was seized instantly and questioned as to the occurrence, which he described to be perfectly accidental. A jury of his countrymen subsequently confirmed the allegation, and the innocence of the man was considered to be put beyond all doubt, by the circumstance of his adopting the only child of the deceased, William Aylmer, educating him at his own expense, and clearing off all the debts to a very large amount with which his father's patrimony had been encumbered. The youth had been educated with the infant daughter of his father's friend, until the age of ten, when he was sent to the metropolis; and he was now returning to the house of his benefactor, after an absence of nine years, during which time he had made himself perfect in all the accomplishments which a college, and subsequently a polite education, could afford.

Having performed the greater part of his journey in a kind of itinerant penitentiary called a jingle, an illegitimate sort of vehicle, somewhat between a common cart and a damaged

spring-carriage, possessing all the rickety insecurity of the one, with all the clumsiness of the other, young Aylmer determined to trust to a pair of well qualified legs for the remainder of the route, and was now in the act of striking off the high road into the Kerry mountains which lay between him and Bally-Aylmer, near which Mr. Fitzmaurice resided, with the intention of completing his journey before night.

The " Kingdom of Kerry " is, as Horace Walpole said of a county in England which happens to be very fashionable at present, a great damper of curiosity. Among the mountainous districts in which it abounds, are vast tracts of barren, heathy, and boggy soil, which are totally destitute of human inhabitants. The champaign which now presented itself to the gaze of the traveller, was one of the dreariest that may be easily imagined: heath beyond heath, and bog after bog, as far as his sight could reach in prospect, canopied over by a low dingy and variable sky, and rendered still more dispiriting by the passing gusts of wind which occasionally shrieked over the desolate expanse, with so wildering a cadence as almost

to excuse the superstition of the natives, that the fairies of the mountain ride in the blast, these formed the prominent characteristics of the scene which lay before him.

Now and then as he advanced on his route, a travelling tinker touched his hat to him, and a fish-jolter, from the western coast, nodded a courteous "Dieu ith," as he passed, in his complete suit of sky-blue frieze, whistling to his mule; while, with downcast, meditative look, the patient, passionless animal plodded on, stooping under the weight of two large *cleaves* of fish, intended for the next market. Often, too, the eye of the young collegian found matter more interesting in the laughing, round, red cheeks, snow-white teeth, and roguish blue eyes of the country girls, who hurried past him with a drop curtsy, and a half modest, half cunning glance, shot from under the eye-lash, with an expression which seemed to say, "there be coquets out of Dublin." All traces of cultivation had not yet disappeared—the hardy potato, in all its varieties of cup, white-eye, English red, kidney, London lady, black bull, rattle, early American, apple, white potato, &c. &c.

&c., diversified the ungrateful plain, with several plots or gardens of variegated bloom, and filled the air with sweetness. The young gentleman's pair of velocipedes, however, were so vigorous in the execution of the trust confided to them, as to quickly place him beyond the influence of these outskirts of cultivation; and, after an hour's walking, he found himself far beyond the sight or sign of human habitation, a good hazel stick in his hand, and a Murphy's Lucian in his coat-pocket. He had received and noted down in his memory with great exactness the various landmarks by which his course was to be directed, and he felt too unbounded a confidence in his own powers of discrimination, to doubt his being able to recognise them when they should occur. But those who have been similarly circumstanced will easily acknowledge the probability of a miscalculation in this respect. It is even as in the great world—however minute or provident may be the code of instructions with which the young adventurer is furnished at his outset, he quickly finds the number of novel contingencies which thrust themselves upon him, too extensive for any se-

cond-hand experience to secure him against all necessity for exercising his own natural judgment.

It was not, however, until he had been journeying for some hours, that Aylmer began to think at all of the possibility of mistaking his route. His mind was occupied with meditations of a far more agreeable nature,—the expectation of speedily revisiting scenes so dear to him, from the recollection of the merry hours he had passed among them, and from their association in his mind with the few friends of his childhood. His benefactor he had seldom seen, for Mr. Fitzmaurice was a silent, solitary, musing man, who loved little company of any kind, after the loss of his friend, and who was not anxious to conceal that a certain natural weakness of temper rendered the sight of the little orphan at no time pleasing to him. Miss Fitzmaurice, however, entertained a very different feeling on this subject; and the childish affection which had swiftly developed itself on both sides, was quite strong enough to supply the want of natural or instinctive fondness. The time that had elapsed since Aylmer's separation from her, had

not abated any of the regard which he always cherished towards his fair friend, and he contemplated their approaching meeting with a glee which originated a great deal in real kindness, and not a little in that curiosity which is so frequently mistaken for affection by those who feel it. He had shaped out, with his mind's eye, a thousand full length portraits of the now womanly Kate Fitzmaurice, from the dusky evening air, and had completed one very much to his satisfaction, when a sudden salutation in a strange voice startled him from his reverie. He looked round him, and perceived now, for the first time, that the night was rapidly closing in. The appearance of the heavens had changed since he had last observed them. Clusters of broken vapour were now hurrying past in swift succession, and there was a bleakness in the air which seemed to portend an approaching change of weather. Turning to ascertain from whom, or whence, the voice proceeded, he beheld a man seated on the heath, his back supported against an in-sloping crag, a grey frieze coat thrown loosely about his person, a pair of brogues, well studded with *pavers* (large-headed

nails, used for the strong shoes of the peasantry in Ireland), and an auburn-coloured felt hat, pressed down upon his brows. There was, nevertheless, something of finery in his address, which seemed inconsistent with this coarseness of appearance.

"A question from a stranger is hardly sinful in such a place as this," he proceeded, after Aylmer had acknowledged his courtesy, "particularly as a man has his own choice about answering it. Do you mean to journey much farther to-night, sir?"

"I hope to reach Bally-Aylmer before the night has become much darker."

The stranger shifted his position, and was silent for a few minutes. "Bally-Aylmer?" he exclaimed at last, "you are the young master, then?"

"My name is Aylmer."

"Bally-Aylmer! Um. It is seven long miles from you now, if you took the nearest way that is, and that is not possible for any one to do that knows so little of the mountain-roads or tracks as you do. I was going in the same direction myself, but seeing the night about to

fall dark, I preferred taking my chance for shelter under this crag, where I shall lie dry, at least, to my chance of a drenching, and perhaps something worse, among the bogs and crags that lie about half a mile beyond us. If you will proceed, you are like enough to have a hard night. Do you not hear the *Cashen** roar?"

"I do; but the fear of a little rain must not deter me. I have been out on worse nights."

"There are other dangers, sir, no less worthy to be avoided than the chances of pit and bog."

"Oh, I remember that too—my head is filled with tales of the Kerry mountains, and their marauders, and banathees, and phukas; but for the one, I am provided with this amulet (brandishing his beads), and here is a charm for the other," elevating his stout black-thorn in a gay humour.

The stranger was again silent for a short time, during which he seemed to canvass the whole person of the young collegian with a

* The *Cashen* is a stream which empties itself into the Shannon, at no great distance from Ballylongford, in Kerry. At the approach of rainy weather, the sound of its waters can be heard distinctly at a distance of many leagues.

curious eye, at the same time that, whether accidentally or otherwise, his own features were almost entirely concealed by his position. At length, taking from his pocket a sealed letter, he handed it towards Aylmer, and said, "I had orders to leave this at Bally-Aylmer, for some one of the family there. If you will pardon the liberty of my offering it, you will do me a great service, and save me a long journey out of my way."

Aylmer readily took the letter, and in placing it in his pocket-book, caught, for the first time, a view of the stranger's countenance. It was that of an aged man, with nothing very uncommon in its character; though a flashing, yet wavering and doubtful recollection, seemed to rush on Aylmer's mind the instant he looked upon it. He felt satisfied that he had never seen the countenance before, and yet its expression startled him with a feeling of sudden recognition, for which he afterwards could in no manner account. He had not an opportunity of pursuing his scrutiny farther, for at that instant the muttering of a distant thunder-peal, preceded by the falling of a few large drops of

rain, induced the old man to return to his shelter beneath the rock. Wishing him a courteous farewell, the youth proceeded on his way, puzzled a little at he knew not what.

"If I were a Pythagorean," said he with himself, "this adventure might help to strengthen my faith, for unless it be a glimpse into another state of existence, I am at a loss what I shall make of it."

After casting a rather uncomfortable glance at the heavens, which were now darkening above him so rapidly as to leave him little hope of clearing the mountains so speedily as he intended, he pushed on at a vigorous rate. The storm which had been threatening, however, in a very short time burst forth in all its violence. The sky became one dense mass of black, illuminated only at intervals by the blue and sheeted lightning, that served to reveal to him the perils among which he was entangled, without assisting to guide him out of them. He could perceive that the beaten path which he now followed, lay through a wide morass, or bog, and so indistinctly was it marked out, that he found himself obliged to proceed with the utmost cau-

tion, although the rain had already begun to descend in torrents upon him.

He was mincing his steps in this manner, and beginning to feel a greater respect than he had hitherto done for the recommendation of the old man, when he was startled by feeling some living creature brush swiftly by his legs, so as almost to touch them, and presently after, in a pause of the storm, a loud ringing whistle, followed by a shouting and hallooing at a distance, greeted his ear. A low grumbling bark, very near him, seemed to give answer to the sounds; and Aylmer heard the animal which had been snuffing inquisitively about him just before, bound and scamper off in the direction from whence the voice proceeded. In the hope of obtaining some assistance, the adventurer put his lungs to their best uses, and endeavoured to outroar the warring of the elements themselves; but the effort proved to be a total failure, for he was not heard, or at least not attended to. He hurried on, nevertheless, with a feeling of greater security, on the path which the dog had taken, and in a short time was rewarded for his perseverance, by feeling the firm mountain heath

beneath his feet. He now looked round him in the hope of finding himself in the neighbourhood of some human habitation, and for once was not deceived. Not more than a hundred yards to his right, in a sudden declivity of the mount, he perceived a cabin, with half the wicker-door thrown open, and revealing, in the strong light of a well-furnished hearth, an abode which seemed to promise much comfort and accommodation. He made no more ado, but straightway presented himself at the entrance.

“Boloa irath!”* he exclaimed, as he bent forward over the half-door, willing to conciliate the good-will of the inmates, by affecting a familiarity with their habits and language.

“And you likewise,” was the answer returned by the “all” whom he had blessed; a plain looking aged woman, who sat enjoying the delights of ease and a dhudheen (short pipe) in the chimney-corner. Aylmer drew back the bolt of the wicker and entered. The old woman continued smoking her pipe without expressing either displeasure at his intrusion, or

* Bless all here.

anxiety to do the honours of her house ; almost without raising her eyes from the heap of red and blazing turf on which they were musingly bent. Finding whom he had to deal with, and not disposed to lose much time in ceremony, her unbidden guest drew a sogan-chair close to the fire, and while he briefly explained the circumstances which had compelled him to be a trespasser on her hospitality, he made himself perfectly at home with respect to his shoes, stockings, and coat, which he suspended before the blaze, while he received with much satisfaction its full influence upon his person. After he had in some degree elevated his own temperature to the level of the atmosphere in which he was now placed, another inconvenience began to press upon his recollection, which he yet saw no means of removing. He turned his eye in various directions, but could discern nothing that could be useful to a man in want of a supper. At length he ventured to break his mind to his hostess on the subject. She at once directed his attention to a cupboard at the end of the room, to which he repaired with highly excited anticipations. All his anxieties were set at rest

by the apparition of a good supply of cold roast mutton, with some oaten bread, and potatoes in great abundance. Laying joyous hands upon his prize, he bore it with much gratification to the deal table which stood in the centre of the apartment, and presently fell to work upon it; his hostess, during the whole time, preserving her attitude and look of indifference or listlessness, of which her guest was now too agreeably occupied to take any cognizance.

While he was yet seated at table, the sound of several voices outside the door diverted his attention, for the first time, from his fare. The occasional broken and hurried sentences of command or remonstrance which were bandied from one to the other of the unseen speakers, were alternated by the low and stifled bleatings of a sheep, which speedily terminated in a quick and gurgling expression of pain, that sufficiently demonstrated the means which had been adopted to secure its silence.

"Smaha buhill!" exclaimed one, "faix, she's a joyant of a baste. Take her round to the barn, Will; and do you an Lewy make haste in to your supper.—Here, Vauria!"

"Vauria is here av you want her," shrilled out the old woman, who had, at the first sound of the voices, made an extraordinary exertion to place a *skillet* of potatoes over the fire before the speaker should enter, and had now resumed her pipe and indolence.

This had scarcely passed, when a stout, able-bodied man, his face smeared with bog-dust, having the appearance of a grazier, (and a very ill-looking one) flung himself into the house. His astonishment at beholding a stranger quietly seated at his table, and demolishing his cheer, was so vividly expressed as scarcely for the moment to place his hospitality in a very favourable point of view. It was only after an uninterrupted gaze of a few seconds, that he suffered a half unconscious "Dieu ith" to pass his lips. "Dieu ith agus a Vauria!"* was the reply of Aylmer.

"'Tisn't driven in by the weather you were?" continued the cottager, (meaning directly the contrary). Aylmer nodded an assent, as he continued eating. "A smart evening, indeed," was the next observation; "*Sha guthine!*"† replied

* God and Mary be with you.

† Yes, indeed.

the collegian, still continuing to use his vernacular tongue, and in every possible way endeavouring to mystify his real condition.

The querist was about to address the old woman, when darting a sudden glance at his guest, he quickly asked him "if he understood English?" a question which the infrequency of the accomplishment in those districts rendered feasible enough. Instantly catching at the probable motive in which it originated, Aylmer replied at once in the negative. The cottager and the old woman soon after entered into conversation in their own broken and mangled effort at the idiom.

"An who tould him fare the mutton was?" inquired the owner of the house, after the woman had satisfied him as to all previous particulars, "In troth it's asy seen what a thrashen he meant to give it, when he stript to the work that way." Here Aylmer was near betraying himself by the smile which began to struggle on his lips.

"Lewy did a purty piece o' work this evening, (night)" continued the host, "Cahill-cruv-dharug's herdsman will be missen a ha' porth o'

tar in the mornen. One of the prettiest creatures on the long walk, and fat, ready to melt in our arms. Take it from me, Vauria, Cahill Fitzmaurice won't be a bit glad to be eased of her, to-morrow morning."

"Let him score it over against the blood of Robert Aylmer, then, and he'll be the gainer still, may be," muttered the old woman.

"Pho! Pho! Easy. What nonsense you talk. Wasn't he cleared o' that be a judge an jury, in the face o' the whole country?—Pho!"

"I was aboard the boat that awful night, an I heard words spoken that oughtn't to pass a Christian's lips, except he was a Turk. But what's the use of being talking? There's as much time to come after as ever went before us, an they say blood will speak if it bursts the grave for it."

Often as he had heard these circumstances repeated, and enthusiastic as early conviction had made him in the confidence of their utter groundlessness, it was not very easy for Aylmer to support his assumption of perfect listlessness and indifference, while the above conversation was passing. Notwithstanding the feeling of

indignation which the rambling imputations of the hag excited in his mind, he could not prevent their sinking deep into his spirits, and taking a hold there which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. The conviction, too, of the immediate and imminent peril in which he was placed—for it was no longer a matter of doubt to him that he had fallen upon a gang of the far-famed Kerry sheep-stealers—contributed not a little to the uneasiness of his situation. He began strenuously to long for an opportunity of withdrawing himself from the chance of further illustrations of their mountain hospitality.

Shortly after, the cottager started up from his seat by the fire, and said rapidly, “There’s the white horse on the pzaties; I’ll go and see what is it keeps the boys, and do you get up one o’ your old ancient fables, and keep this man by the fire till we come back. We’ll talk o’ what’s to be done abroad.”

No sooner had the speaker disappeared than Aylmer began to meditate the most probable means of taking himself out of the cottage, and its neighbourhood, without awakening suspicion. He got up from the table—walked towards the

fire—resumed all his dress, with the exception of his hat, which still hung in the chimney corner, reeking against the heat: and after all this was done, with as great an appearance of carelessness and indifference as he could command, he took his seat by the fire, stirred it up briskly, and made an effort to engage his hostess in conversation; in which, however, to his great satisfaction, he totally failed. The old woman seemed to be one whom time had beaten down into a state of almost negative existence, and whose only positive enjoyment seemed to consist in the absence of all exertion. Far from complying with the cottager's desire that she should endeavour to entertain her guest, she seemed, from the moment of his departure, to be almost unconscious of the presence of a second person; and went on, exhausting her store of tobacco, and musing over the fire with the comfortable air of a slave who has been relieved from the presence of the task-master.

The violence of the tempest had now considerably abated, although the night still continued dark, and the wind hissed along the broken thatched roof in fitful and uneasy gusts.

After making some observation on the change, Aylmer walked towards the little window, as if to look out upon the night, and in so doing stumbled upon a new confirmation of his suspicions. Casting his eye, accidentally, towards the hurdle loft, which was constructed over the ceiling of an inner apartment, he observed several piles of sheepskins thrust under the sloping eaves, and heaped towards the centre, the spoils of many an enterprize similar to that of which he had just before witnessed the termination.

As the time rolled on, the anxiety of the youth increased, and he determined at length on making some exertion for his freedom, before the male tenants of the cottage should return. Leaving his hat where it hung, in order the more effectually to baffle the suspicions which his absence might occasion, he made some trifling remark to the old woman, and passed into the air. After he had crept a few paces from the house, and felt himself placed without the immediate circle of the influence of its possessors, he made a joyous bound on his path, and ran along for a con-

siderable distance, without a moment's pause, in the direction from which he had turned aside during the tempest. The rain had ceased and the wind abated, but the sky was yet loaded with vapour, and the wanderer had little more than random conjecture to depend upon in pursuing his route over the mountain heath. Early as it yet was in the night, and totally ignorant as he was of the distance he might have to conquer before he should arrive at the termination of the wilds, he could not avoid feeling an occasional depression of spirits when he reflected on the possibility of his being pursued; in which case the familiarity of his enemies with the passes of the mountain, and its bogs, must leave him at a perilous disadvantage. He dashed forward on his way, however, without stopping to calculate disheartening probabilities, and journeyed for nearly an hour without meeting any impediment to arrest his progress, or any piece of good fortune that might assist it.

On a sudden, the disparting of an immense mass of cloud, which had for a long time been condensed on the horizon behind him, betrayed

the night-walker to the glances of a few kind stars, and very shortly after the veil was withdrawn from the fair, round, fat face of the winter moon herself, and a welcome flood of light was poured about his path. He now discovered himself to be still surrounded, as far as his sight could reach, with the uneven wilderness of heath, over which he had so long been toiling, and no indication lay, within the wide circuit which his eye was enabled to comprehend, of human neighbourhood. There was no sign of cultivation, no bounds of partition, nothing but heath and bog to be discovered, and this circumstance contributed materially to depress the cheerfulness of spirit which the sudden accession of light had awakened within him. This uncomfortable state of mind, however, in some time began to give place to a feeling of more immediate and positive alarm. Whether it was that his imagination, highly excited as it had been by the events of the evening, became over quick at transforming all indistinct sights and sounds into occasions of terror, or that such occasions did in reality exist, Aylmer could not divest himself of a strong

consciousness that the chase was up behind. Now and then, in the intervals of the distant moaning of the Cashen, his ear was startled by the fancied or actual echoes of the baying of a hound upon his track, a sound however which was yet so fine and so equivocal,

—— “that nothing lived
 ’Twixt it and silence—”

He paused for a moment, and bent his ear to the earth in order to assure himself. In a little time he became convinced of its reality. The portrait of the cottage hound which had startled him at first sight by the indications of fatal sagacity, which he could collect from its appearance, “so flewed, so sanded,” its head,

“ —— hung
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
 Crook-kneed, and dewlapp’d like Thessalian bulls,”

its sullen, blood-shot eye, and lumpish mouth, all rushed together upon his recollection, and utterly discomfited the slight feeling of security to which he had just before begun to deliver himself up. He grasped his black-thorn club with a firmer gripe, and at once made up his

mind to the most desperate contingencies that could arrive. If a much more extensive tract of land lay between him and the houses of honest men, it was evident he had not the slightest chance of eluding his pursuers, provided, as they were, with so fearful and so infallible a clue to his position. His only reliance was on a pair of vigorous limbs, which he forthwith applied to the best purpose possible, and which he might have calculated on with very great rationality, had his hunters been altogether human. As it was, in spite of all his exertions, he found that they were gaining rapidly upon him. He darted forward with renewed speed, and as he panted and stumbled on his course, in one of those glances of reflection, which even in the act of the most violent bodily exertion, will sometimes flash upon the reason, he made a wordless resolution within his heart, that he never would hunt or course a hare as long as he lived.

Still he dashed forward headlong on his path, and still that horrid, sullen, twanging cry became louder and louder upon his track, until it sounded in his ear, as the trumpet's charge

might be supposed to do in that of a soldier destined to a forlorn hope. The shouting of the animal's masters, too, cheering their guide upon the game, became audible in the distance. With a failing spirit, Aylmer glanced on all sides as he bounded along, but could discern no means of even possible protection. No stream, no tract of water by which he might baffle the terrible instinct of his four-footed enemy, not one of the many contrivances by which he had heard and read this had been successfully accomplished; here presented themselves. His brain, his sight, his senses became confused, a fear like that which oppresses the dreamer in a fit of night-mare, lodged itself upon his heart, his will became powerless, and the motion which still hurried him along his path, might almost be termed involuntary. He thought of nothing, he saw nothing, he heard nothing, but the fast approaching terrors in his rear, the heavy, confident, baying of the hound, and the fierce hallooing of his pursuers. Fortune seemed in every way to conspire against the devoted youth, for in rushing down a slight declivity of the heath, a small tuft of the

weed came in contact with his foot, and flung him with considerable violence on the ground. He sprung to his feet again, but fell at the first effort to proceed; his foot was maimed past all use. One thrill of utter despair shot through his frame, and the next moment a perfect indifference came over him. The shouts of the hunters were now almost close upon him, but, and he hardly trusted his sense, when it first informed him of it, there was another sound mingled with theirs. He started to his feet, and stood erect in spite of his hurt; he heard the sound distinctly, it was the dash of waters on his left. Claspings his hands together, and offering, in one flashing thought, as fervent a thanksgiving as ever passed sinner's lips, he staggered toward the spot. Coming suddenly over the brow of the hill he beheld, immediately before him, a small river, broken in its course by several ledges of rock, and flinging itself in masses of white foam into a kind of basin, whose surface the full winter's moon had lighted up with its gladdening influence, so as to shine "like a welcoming" in the student's eyes. The banks of the stream were fringed

with drooping willows, and a dark angle close to where he stood, seemed to offer the closest and securest mode of concealment that he could desire. Without a moment's thought, or wavering, he slipped down the bank, and seizing one of the twigs, plunged himself, all reeking with perspiration as he was, into the cold, freezing, November flood.

He had not been in this situation long enough to feel the inconvenience of the transition, when his anxieties were renewed by the approach of his pursuers. Creeping under the screen of the hanging willows, and still clinging to the twig which he had grasped, he remained up to his chin in the water, imitating the action of some species of water-fowl, when conscious that they are under the eye of the fowler. From this concealment, completely enveloped, as he was, in a piece of impenetrable shade, he could see his bandy-legged, shag-eared foe, bound fiercely to the bank immediately above him. The animal stopped short, snorted, looked across the stream, and whisked his head, with an action of impatience and disappointment. He ran up and down the bank, his nostrils expanded, and

bent to the earth, and snuffed long and argumentatively about the very spot where Aylmer had descended. In a few seconds after he heard the voices of the mountaineers at the top of the hill.

“Blessed Saviour o’ the airth!—O Lewy! the strame!—We’re lost for ever—Come back here, Sayzer!—The unnait’rel, informing Dane! To come among us, and make a fool of a shoulder of as good mutton as was ever drov the wrong way off a sheep-walk; and, I’ll be your bail for it, he’ll have the army with us to buckisht* in the morning, av we stay for them (which we won’t),—sorrow skreed o’ the mait he left upon the bones, as much as would make a supper for old Vauria herself.”

Aylmer was too uncomfortably situated at the moment, to enjoy these jests on his prowess at the sheep-stealer’s board, and waited with much uneasiness until the speaker and his companions might be concluded out of all power of observation. Day had begun to dawn before he ventured to re-ascend the bank; and never was the benevolent eye of the morning startled by a

* Breakfast.

more pitiable spectacle of solitary human misery, than he presented at that moment. His fingers stiff and crimped up with the cold, refused to close around the shrubs which he attempted to grasp, his joints were all stark and painful, and his hair and clothes distilling a hundred streams, as if he were, like a male Niobe, about to be resolved into a portion of the element to which he had just been indebted for his existence. Great as was the general inconvenience which he felt, however, he had the satisfaction to find that the cold immersion had arrested the progress of whatever inflammatory symptoms his sprain in the foot had occasioned, and he was now enabled to turn the limb to which it appertained to some account. He walked, like a piece of half-animated stone-work, along the banks of the stream, for nearly half a mile, and had the pleasure to observe, in spite of the clouds which the agitations and exertions of the night had still left upon his brain, that he was close to one of the most frequented public roads of the country. He had no difficulty in discovering his exact position, and was not a little comforted at finding that he was no more than

a mile from the residence of his friend and guardian, Mr. Fitzmaurice. Not willing, however, to present himself before his old friends in the deplorable, yet ludicrous plight to which his mountain adventure had reduced him, he directed his course toward his own family residence, which lay at no great distance from him, and which, though it had only occasionally been occupied by him, was, he knew, tenanted by the aged widow of his dead father's herdsman, and her son, Sandy Culhane. At the hands of those old "follyers" of his family, Aylmer knew he might calculate on receiving all the accommodation which his present condition rendered necessary. His long absence from the country, uninterrupted, as it had been, by even a visit to his friends at the customary seasons for such indulgence, secured him against all probability of being recognised on the way to the "great house," and he met with no interruption in his walk thither, which was easily accomplished before the sun had well shook himself after his night's sleep.

Bally-Aylmer was one of those architectural testimonies to the folly of our fathers, which are

scattered rather abundantly over the face of the green isle. Although the term has slipped from beneath our pen, there was little worthy of the name of architecture, about either the principal building, or its official appendages. The site of the house appeared to have been selected in those days when it was the wont (contrary to modern practice on similar occasions), to choose the lowest, as the most graceful, as well as convenient and salubrious position; and when that position was ascertained, by rolling a large round stone down an eminence, and sinking the foundation wherever it happened to repose. Aylmer, fatigued as he was, found a sufficient excitement in the first view of his native place, to divert his attention, in some degree, from his sufferings. Accustomed, as he had been during his absence, to the splendours of metropolitan architecture, he could not avoid feeling a momentary sense of humiliation, when he perceived the utter poverty and tastelessness of an establishment which in his childhood he had been used to look upon as the perfection of elegance, and with which even his distant recollection had not presumed to quarrel, until he now brought

his classical feeling and experienced judgment full upon it, in all its hideous and awkward reality. The entrance consisted of two lean, gawky-looking piers, built of plain rough stone, and standing bolt-upright, like young steeples, on each side of a low, shattered, paltry wooden gate, which had long discontinued the use of its hinges, and was propped up to its office by the assistance of a few large stones, rolled against the lower bars, the removal of which, for the admission of *cars* (carts) and horses, usually occupied as much time each day as a carpenter might have lost in screwing on a fresh pair of hinges. On the summit of one of those piers, a noseless Banthee, or Banathee, done in limestone, the work of some rustic Westmacott, might be observed, in the act of combing her long and flowing hair, an action very generally attributed to this warning spirit. Upon the other, nothing was visible to the naked eye. That fashionable appendage to modern improvement, a factitious lake, was not wanted here, though the specimen presented was rather on the small scale. It consisted of a sheet of some liquid, or other, about twenty feet by

twelve in extent, (lying close inside the entrance), and greeted more senses than one of the incomer, with an intensity which it required no great fastidiousness to deprecate. The house itself, a square-roofed, lumpish-looking edifice, sadly out of repair, and destitute of even a solitary twig, or fir, to conceal its threadbare masonry; its line of red binding-tiles broken and blown away; its chimneys damaged and menacing; and its slated roof hospitably inviting, in divers apertures, the visitations of the winds and rain—all, together, presented as bleak and comfortless a spectacle as ever greeted even a provincial eye. Without detaining the adventurous youth any longer in his uncomfortable *deshabille*, we shall hasten to relieve the pain of our sympathizing reader, by informing him that Aylmer was not disappointed in his calculations on the services of old Ally Culhane, by whose assistance he was presently rid of his cumbersome habiliments, and introduced to the consolation of a well aired, well blanketed state bed, where he speedily lost all memory of his night's ramble, in a good, round, healthy, dreamless sleep.

The only immediately habitable rooms in the venerable mansion, were that in which its heritor at present slumbered, and the kitchen in which the aged Ally and her son had domiciliated since the house had been, in a great measure, abandoned to them by its original possessors. The others had been partly stript of their furniture and locked up, or appropriated to the Irish use of store-rooms and granaries for the produce of the adjacent acres, which were turned to the best possible account for the benefit of his ward, by Mr. Fitzmaurice, who seemed never happy, or even contented, unless when he was occupied in some way or other about the Aylmer property. Though he was a native of a country where more apologies are found for the shedding of human blood than would, if universally admitted, greatly further the interests of society; and although much of his life had passed amid scenes where homicide was familiar as the day-light, Cahill Fitzmaurice had, either from a natural quickness of feeling, or from the influence of that half-animal, half-chivalrous sense of moral honour, which is so often made to supply the place of system, of

principle, or of true religion in the minds of a neglected people, retained a tetchiness of spirit about what he was pleased to call his reputation, which would come with an ill grace enough from the lips of a smuggler of the present day. Notwithstanding his "honourable acquittal," too, by the county grand jury, of the horrible offence imputed to him, and the assurance of those his judges, that "he left his dungeon with as unstained a character as if he never had been called to it;" for speeches of this kind were among the specimens of cant in vogue then, as well as now, ~~the~~ ²⁰ he felt convinced, and the conviction sunk deep into his soul, that suspicion was a shade of guilt, and that there was, in fact, no such thing as an "honourable acquittal" from a public accusation. The consequence of this feeling was, a total and marked alteration in the character of the man. His frankness—his hospitality—his broad-faced, laughing good-humour,—all his social qualities were blasted, as if by a lightning shock. He was no longer to be seen at the fair or session; his steward being entrusted with an unlimited discretion, as to the fate of the flocks and droves which were trans-

mitted to all places of public traffic. His farm was, in a great degree, neglected by him; and the only active business in which he still continued to take any thing like an active interest, was, as before alluded to, the improvement of his young ward's inheritance, in which he was vigorous and successful; having contrived, during the long period of the youth's minority, to amass for his future benefit a sum of money which might enable him, at the proper season, to take possession of his patrimony in a manner calculated to assure him of an influential station in his native county. His house and his board were still open to the traveller, and the welcome was not diminished either in its warmth or sincerity; but it came no longer from his own lips, —he never appeared among his guests—and was seldom visible even to an early acquaintance. His pride, in fact—his Irish pride—had been stabbed to the heart; he felt that it was in the power of any man who grudged him the fragment of reputation he still retained, to snatch it from him by a word—a look—a gesture. With this conviction full upon his own mind, he had, in the two or three efforts which he made imme-

diately after his liberation, to regain his old place among his old friends, entered into their society with an almost morbid tremulousness of feeling—a quickness to anticipate the intention of slight, which is alike the characteristic of the fiery and chivalrous, and of the weak and sensitive nature; and which, in various degrees, has been set down as the leading peculiarity of the veritable Milesian by all painters of national character, from the days of Captain Macmorris down to those of the knight of Blunderbuss Hall. The embarrassment which this feeling imparted to his own manner, naturally communicated itself to those whom he addressed, and the unfortunate Fitzmaurice, not possessed of sufficient philosophy to trace the effect to its real origin in his own demeanour, attributed it at once to the unquieted suspicions which his over-wrought susceptibility had led him to anticipate, and gave up the attempt at once in a paroxysm of despair. Thus it was that, with as kind, as generous, and as benevolent a heart as ever beat, Fitzmaurice found himself, in the vigour of his manhood, and in the full possession of all those qualities which had for a long series of

years rendered him the delight of his companions, struck down, by one home-blow, into a branded and degraded wretch, whom chance had protected from death, but not from ignominy. The gloom which was thus cast over his heart, speedily found its way to his brow; and, in a few years, he would have been a skilful physiognomist who could have traced, in the sallow, wasted cheek, the indented temples, the contracted, darkening brows, the thin colourless lip, and sullen, dark, disappointed eye of the man; a memory of the broad, red, careless, moon-cheeked face of the noisy Cahill Fitzmaurice, the Pylades of Robert Ayler. No consciousness of innocence could comfort or support him under the pressure of so grievous, so overwhelming an accusation as that which had been cast upon him. He had been charged in open court with the murder of his oldest and kindest friend; he had even been bowed down to the ignominy of giving a formal denial to such a charge. There are imputations, the very necessity of disproving which is as blasting to a man's character, as the recording guilty to others; and Fitzmaurice thought, or felt, that

this was one of them. One merit, however, he at least possessed amid all the blameful sullenness and darkness of spirit to which he delivered himself up—he never was heard to indulge in those “why’s” and “wherefore’s” on the justice of his fate—in which (very unhappily,) so many sufferers, self-tormentors, and uneasy speculators in matters of Providence, are apt to look for consolation. Fitzmaurice took the more rational and amiable part of quiet endurance; and those who were familiar with his temper and habits (as he had once been,) remarked, some with wonder, some with pleasure and commendation, that the doom which seemed to oppress his heart, even to breaking, never had the power to wring from his lips a single murmur of complaint against heaven.

Notwithstanding this sentiment of resignation, or—whatever it might be, it is still doubtful whether the heart of the man could have borne up long, if it were left to its own solitary broodings over the events of the past, and the bleak, dreary nothingness of the prospect which the future presented to the eye of his sorrow. One consolation, however, had been spared him—one

true friend—unchanged, unchangeable—one wound up in all his interests and feelings, as intimately as even in the helplessness of unfriended degradation he could have desired,—one whose duty as well as inclination it was to cling to him under any circumstances that stopped short of moral guilt, and who would have died, even at that point, before the link that bound them together had been sundered. It was his only child and daughter, Katharine, of whom mention has been made before now in our story. True, it was not until many years had elapsed, after her father found cause to sigh for a real friend, that Kate had reached an age sufficiently matured to enable her to comprehend, much less to sympathize in his distresses: but her devoted and passionate attachment to her parent seemed to be born with her, and the slow but sensible developement of a vigorous reason, which manifested itself in the progressive force and eloquence of her consolations in his hours of depression, came over the spirit of the broken man with the influence of a gradual summer sunrise. There is so much of vanity mixed up with even the most amiable sentiments of our

nature, that we never fail to direct all the energies of our affection with most satisfaction and assiduity where we perceive them to be most successful. There is too an unconscious self-gratification in the exercise of any influence over the thoughts and feelings of a suffering fellow being, which endears him to us at least quite as sensibly as his unhappy fortunes do; and ill-natured as the conjecture may appear, perhaps we should not widely err in attributing to a partial operation of this unintended, undetected self-seeking some portion of the deep devotedness of love, with which the merry-hearted Kate abandoned herself in the full glow of youth, and with the fullest capabilities for the enjoyment of more congenial society, to the silence, the solitude, and the gloom of her father's dark oaken parlour. Without once daring to gratify a mean curiosity by ascertaining, or striving to ascertain the occasion of the heaviness that oppressed him, she applied all the powers of her mind and heart to lighten and relieve it. Such curiosity, indeed, she never was at any time assailed with, for however changed her parent might appear to

others, who remembered him in the gaiety of his manhood, he had always been the same in her eyes, always the discomfited, downcast, silent, and fitful, yet kind and affectionate old man. Her education had taken place altogether under her paternal roof, and Fitzmaurice had the happiness to find that he had not injured his daughter by neglecting the hints respecting a few years boarding in Killarney convent, which some religious friends had scattered in his ear.

On the evening, and about (perhaps) the very period when Aylmer was conversing with the stranger in the Kerry mountains, the father and daughter were seated in the large, old-fashioned parlour, the window of which commanded, at a vast distance, a view of the hills, or yet more gentle elevations of the soil which ran along the line of coast, revealing at intervals certain glimpses of the blue waters of Dingle Bay, which were all massed at present in one glow of hazy splendour, by the influence of the departing sun. Now and then a white sail, glancing like a speck of light on the waters, appeared and flitted across those scanty gaps in

the horizon, all moving inland, and relieving by their motion, and the associations which they waked up, a good deal of the still and monotonous repose of the interjacent prospect. The old man, who had been more than usually gloomy during the evening, and who had not spoken during several hours, now sat, his arm-chair drawn towards the window, and fronting the distant bay, on which his eyes were fixed with an expression varied only in its intensity, but at all times stamped with the hue of a consistent and enduring melancholy. Kate, with the fineness of tact which long habit as well as native delicacy had given her, perceived that something had occurred during the course of the day, (most of which he had spent at Bally-Aylmer), to agitate him, and she felt that it was one of those moments at which all interference with, or intrusion upon, his feelings, would jar against his very nature. She pursued her work therefore in silence, venturing only in an occasional impulse of anxiety to steal a glance from under her curved eye-lashes at his darkening, dispirited countenance. Had Kate been

gifted with any portion of physiognomical penetration, she might have read, in that apparently still and evenly dejected range of features, the influence of thoughts which should have excited her love, her pity, her sorrow, and her dismay, by turns. She might have beheld a long train of mournfully joyous associations, touched from their sleep by the influence of the sweet scene on which his eye was fixed, and wakening, in their turn, recollections still more remote, all blended and mixed up with the absorbing event in which all his misery had originated; and each bringing a new stimulant to the disease which that event, and its consequences, had occasioned in his mind.

While each thus followed up their own fancies "in social silence," the attention of Katharine was diverted by a light tapping at the parlour-door, which, opening presently after, admitted the tip of a polished, pretty nose, a blue eye, and a section of a broad, bold forehead. The blue eye was directed on the young mistress of the mansion, and the finger of a hand, yet reeking with soap suds, and of a wrinkled

whiteness, was forthwith protruded, to beckon her from the apartment. Kate obeyed the action in silence.

"What's the matter now, Norry?" said the young lady.

"It's from Bally-Aylmer, miss," was the reply. "Sandy Culhane to be to the posht-office to-day, and to have letters for yourself and himself."

Without waiting to hear more, her lively mistress bounded and skipped past the girl to the kitchen, where stood the welcome messenger, who had, it would seem, refused to deliver up his precious freight, until he should have received his *albricias*, either in smiles or commendations from the lips of the "young missiz, herself, the darlen."

These letters were what Katharine judged them to be, the avant couriers of Aylmer's return, written about a month before, and now almost overtaken by him, an event less usual in Irish post-offices at the present day than it was then, when there was no Sir Edward Lees to keep the machinery in working condition. More than half the delight which she felt, however,

instantly referred itself to her parent, and her affectionate heart bounded at the thought, that she had at last found something with which she might venture to break in upon the gloom, that had taken possession of his mind during the whole of the afternoon.

"I have news for you, sir," said she as she re-entered the apartment on tiptoe, her pretty lip pinched up to murder a smile that was still struggling for its life, her half-shut, grey, waggish eyes bent merrily on his, and her whole face beaming with a child-like, irrepressible delight.

"Go, go, you little fool, mind your work."

"I know who will be the loser then," retorted Kate, as with an affectation of hoydenish freedom, she leaned over the back of his chair, and flourished the letter before his eyes.

"Who, monkey?"

"Do you know that hand?" replied Kate, slipping one soft white arm round her father's neck, and with the other holding the letter steadily before him, while she watched his countenance, as one would that of a child to whom one has just given a new gilt covered

picture-book. While Fitzmaurice put on his spectacles, and glanced over the contents of the letter, she felt a quick and hurried pulsation beneath her hand, which at once induced her to withdraw it from his neck. Her intuitive delicacy of feeling made her shrink with scorn from the acquiring an insight into the soul of another, by the use of any of those "points of cunningge" of which my Lord Verulam, Bacon, gives us so elaborate and philosophical a detail.

"The third?" said Fitzmaurice, when he had concluded, "then I should not be surprised if we had him here this evening."

"This evening! *O my!*" exclaimed Kate, as she glanced first at her dress, and then, involuntarily, at the ancient pier-glass, with its gorgeous volumes of gilded foliage, on the other side of the room.

"*O my! O you!* What you? Poh, what nonsense!" exclaimed Fitzmaurice, as he observed the direction which her eyes had taken. "This young man's arrival, Kate, seems to give you a great deal of pleasure."

Kate blushed, between a feeling of consciousness and of surprise, and without making

any reply, she looked in her father's face with an expression of astonishment, confusion, and curiosity.

"To me," he continued, replying to her gesture, "I confess this intelligence brings no unmingled sensation. I believe I have done enough to shew that I love young Aylmer well—I like him, too, for his own gentle qualities, as much as for his name's sake; but I cannot forget, neither, that to that very name I owe the loss of all I prized in life—all my old friends—my good fame—my poor wife, your sweet mother, Kate, who was lying on a sick-bed when I was dragged from her side, to—— and who mingled her death-groan with your first cry of sorrow, my girl, as she placed you in my arms. But these are unfair and selfish modes of feeling," he continued, as he saw a tear glisten in the eye of his daughter, "I must learn to conquer them. Only I would be alone for the rest of the evening." And kissing his daughter affectionately, the old man passed to his sleeping apartment.

* * * *

During all this while Aylmer has been enjoy-

ing a comfortable sleep, and it is high time we should wake him up again, for the amusement of our readers, or, to speak more modestly, for the furtherance of our story. The noon of a bright frosty day had just passed when he awoke. So heavy and unbroken had been his rest, that he could scarcely believe his eyes, when he saw the sunbeams strike on a point of noon which he remembered from his childhood. Aylmer had not yet passed that happy season of life when novelty is enjoyment, and change of place and circumstance seems almost to imply change of being. As he opened his eyes on the old-fashioned curtains of his old-fashioned state bed, under whose lofty tester he had often reposed in childhood, and recognised the faces of many familiar friends on those hangings—the same pike-nosed greyhound, in the yet unaccomplished act of springing over the same barred gate, the same hunter, sticking in the same slough, and the same clumsy squire, kissing the same funny-looking, blowzy-cheeked milk-maid—it seemed to him as if the whole intervening space had been but the circle of one long night, and all its crowd of events and

changes nothing more than the shadows of a vivid dream. When he flung back the curtains, however, and tossed his manly bulk out of bed, the sight of a tolerably rounded calf gave him, like the beard of Rip Van Winkle, assurance of their reality.

His toilet, and the preparations for it made by his old friend, Alley, also reminded him of his change from Irish city to Irish country life. The luxury of soap was what she appeared to be totally unprovided with, from her having substituted in its place a handful of dry oatmeal, and a small, clean, piggin-full of new milk, a quid-pro-quo by no means satisfactory to a young man whose darkening chin advised him of the necessity for raising a lather. He now perceived what, in the grey doubtful light of the morning dawn had escaped his observation, the extremely dilapidated state of the apartment in which he stood. The single window was eked out, half glass, half paper; and the shutters swung crazily on their hinges. The plastering of the ceiling, as well as of the walls, had fallen away in various places; and, on one side of the room, where a partition divided it from the kit-

chen; this circumstance disclosed a secret of true Munster economy, creditable alike to the ancient and the present tenants of the mansion. The partition appeared to be composed of hard *slane*-turf,* which, in its smooth coat of mortar and whitewash, had escaped the eyes of inquisitive housewives for a succession of *lustra*, until this unfortunate demolition of the outworks had taken place. On the first occasion for an immediate supply of firing, which subsequently occurred, Sandy sent his right leg through the partition, and furnished his hearth from the breach, to which he often afterwards recurred, although a bog lay within twenty perches of the house, declaring that "the ould wall burned like coal." The breach was at present stopped with a dismantled door of an inner room. "No matter!" thought Aylmer, as he plunged his puckered up, grinning face into the basin of biting cold water, "these things shall be mended when I take the management of the place into my own hands."

* So called to distinguish it from *hand* turf; the one being cut from the soil with an instrument called a *slane*, the other shaped with the hand out of a soft boggy stuff, which is afterwards dried.

As he proceeded in the act of purification, he perceived that his own clothes had been removed from the apartment, as he concluded, for the purpose of being dried; and a suit perfectly strange to him, both from its fashion and its material, was laid across the lofty back of a huge oaken chair in their stead. It consisted of a blue jacket, and trowsers bagging toward the ankle in sailor fashion, both closely studded with gilt buttons, strung in rows, wherever buttons were admissible, and altogether having a great deal more the air of venerable age, both in their *cut* and texture, than fell in very lovingly with the modern taste of the young student. He put them on, however, in default of better, and was not a little surprised to find himself as exactly fitted as if they had been cut *for* himself, and "upon scientific principles." As he concluded his toilet, he recognized, through the breach, the voice of his old companion, Sandy, crooning over an old fox-hunting ditty, as he sat in the chimney corner, addressing, between occasional bars of the melody, sundry conjectures to his mother on the probable issue of Aylmer's return :

" Good-morrow, Fox,"—" Good-morrow, Sir."

" Pray, what is that you're ating?"

" A fine fat goose I stole from you,
Pray, will you come and taste it?"

" Niel flash e piuc

Niel niesh e giub,

Indeed, I will not taste it;

But I promise you, you'll sorely rue

That fine fat goose you're ating!"

" Eh, mother! O holy saints, protect an' save us, look there!" cried Sandy, starting from his place, and crossing, with a face expanded in wonder and awe, to his mother, as Aylmer suddenly entered the kitchen, and confronted him. The old woman, turning her hung-beef countenance over her shoulder, seemed to catch the alarm from her son—and flung her withered arms round his neck for protection, while her smoky eyes continued bent on the astonished youth.

" Hooee! Alilu-war-yeh! Sandy, dear! O, murther! 'Tis IT that's there!"

" 'Tis himself, all out!" roared Sandy.

" The liven imidge!" said Alley.

" Jest as if it stept out o' the pictur frame, down! A sperrit, no less!"

"An the hair! an the eyes! an the whole tote! It bates cock-fighten!"

"My good people," said Aylmer, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered his surprise to cut short the torrent of their ejaculations—"this may be very amusing to you, and very flattering to me, for aught I know; but would you be kind enough to explain what it is in my person that sets you roaring, and kicking, and plunging up in a corner that way?—eh?"

"Thu! thu—thu—thu! 'Tis master Will, then, himself after all!" said Alley, clacking her tongue against the roof of her mouth, as is usual among the peasant Irish, when they wish to express surprise, compassion, or perplexity. After a little time, he was enabled to gather the occasion of their sudden alarm. The clothes which he wore, and which, after a great deal of rummaging among old chests, presses, and worm-eaten wardrobes, were discovered by Alley in an inner apartment, belonged in times past to his father; and helped to strengthen the natural likeness of the son, into an almost deceptive similitude.

"Indeed, it's a burning shame for me to min-

tion it, Master Will, darling," said Alley, as she laid before him his breakfast of fresh eggs, butter, jelly, smooth-coated potatoes, and virgin white milk—"but I couldn't get a taste o' tay, high nor low. But av we have you here to-morrow, there'll be a *keeler* o' the *beestings**—a trate you hadn't in the 'cadamy, I'll be your bail. Indeed, Sandy and meself are trusting now a long while to the milk of o' one stripper; as Mr. Fitzmaurice says we musn't lay a wet finger on the little Kerry cows that fill the firkins for your ixpences behind up. Troth, as I tell Sandy, I think it's in the cow's horns it do be going from us, &c. &c. &c."

While this chat, and a great deal more, equally edifying and imaginative, was gliding forth from between the old herdsman's lips, the person addressed was very sagaciously employed on the viands which she had set before him, and so vigorously did he exert himself, that long before Alley thought of discontinuing her harangue of mingled welcomes, and praises, and

* The first milk of a cow immediately after her *accouchement* is called *beestings* in Ireland; and, dressed in a peculiar way, is considered a delicacy there.—Tastes vary.

moanings, and complaints, he cut it short by declaring his intention of setting off immediately for his guardian's house, where, as he rightly calculated, it was probable his baggage had arrived before now.

It was too cold a morning to think a great deal of love, and yet, as Ayler took his way over the crisp and frosty meadows that lay between him and the residence of the Fitzmaurices, he could not avoid renewing his conjectures as to the probable effect of time on the frame and mind of his fair play-fellow, and repeatedly putting the silent question to his heart, whether he should now seriously fall in love, or no. Capitulation, on such occasions, is a very usual consequence of parley; but as this happens to be one of those situations of the heart (so useful to a story-teller), in which the reader is kind enough to find novelty and entertainment even in repetition, just as one thinks the dinner-bell, at forty years of age, sounds quite as sweetly as it did at ten, there can be no great harm in following the steps of the deliberator through all the gradations of his defeat. His spirit warmed within him, in spite of the season, as he saw the

smoke curling off in light blue masses (it is turf smoke we speak of, gentle London reader), from the chimneys of Kilavariga-house (those classical names are destructive to all sentiment), every stone, and brick, and tile, and crink, and cranny of which were as familiar to his memory as the shape of his nose, or the colour of his hair. There was the great avenue gate, on which Kate and himself, when relieved from the stern constraint of their guardian's eye, were wont to indulge in a fine romping bout of swinging, and riding, and shouting, and screaming, and laughing; and which, if the truth must be told, was the scene of many a serious battle-royal between the pair, so far as that fray could be called a battle, in which all the offence lay on the feminine side. Stepping over the stile on one side of the closed entrance, a greater number of remembrancers of the olden time started up before him—the haggard (Irish-English for hay-yard), behind the stacks of which they had played many a merry game of *hoop*, and hide and seek; the little pond, on which they had launched their green flag-boats, and cheered them as they skimmed over the surface, with as keen

and, certainly, quite as philosophical an interest, as the spectators of the T. Y. C. matches on the banks of father Thames. Leaving all these sweet stimulants of memory behind him, however, Aylmer approached the dwelling of the still sweeter being to whom they were indebted for more than half their interest. As he crossed the lawn, his eyes fixed on the window of the parlour, which (not the gentle instinct of affection, though we would fain assert it, but) his memory told him was her appointed place of work, of study, and of elegant amusement, he saw the light muslin blind withdrawn for an instant, and a fair face, with hair clustering about it, in papers, like ripening grapes, just shewed itself, and "vanished, like a shooting star." The blind was re-adjusted, and Aylmer beheld nothing further of the inmates of Kilariga, until he had applied himself to the brazen knocker of the hall-door. It was opened almost instantly, by (not the dear hand which his throbbing heart had led him to anticipate, but) the more robust and substantial one of Norry, the "getter up of small linen" to the establishment. Those who saw Norry on her

return to the kitchen, averred that there were, in the heightened colour of her cheek, and the sparkle of her eye, tokens of a welcome on her part, and a greeting on Aylmer's, a little more Irish than the lady of the house might have been pleased to witness—but this is none of our business. Aylmer hurried on, with a pulse throbbing in the tumultuousness of expectation, into the parlour, but he found no one there, although the disposition of the furniture shewed him that it had been very recently abandoned by its mistress. The slight feeling of disappointment which this seeming coldness and tardiness gave occasion to, was quickly removed, however, by the appearance of two or three curl-papers, dropped near the pier-glass. Aylmer smiled most roguishly and impudently, as he stooped to pick one up; but he was properly punished for his conceit and impertinence. It was torn from one of his own best composed and most poetical epistles.

Humbled and irritated a little, he began, in the absence of his friend, to collect from the objects around him all the indications of the present state of her mind and habits which these

could supply. The dark-grained, well-polished oaken floor was strewn (around the work-table) with fragments of dress, a species of feminine carelessness, which however severely reprehended by mothers and governesses, has always been regarded both by Aylmer and myself with much tenderness, as imparting a very civilized air to a mansion, when disposed with a sufficiently careful negligence. Nothing is more ornamental to a lonely house, in a wild country, than those scattered symptoms of gentle womanhood. A volume of Ferrar's History of Limerick, lying with a thread-paper between the leaves, enabled Aylmer to form a diagnostic of a little female patriotism, while an unmuffled harp, with a music stand and book, near the window, rather modestly thrown into shade, gave indications of higher accomplishment than he had even been led to hope for. All these delightful conclusions were, however, soon cut short by the sound of a light foot upon the staircase without. His heart leaped into his eyes, as he bent them on the door—the handle stirred—it was opened.

“ Kate ! Kate ! ”

“ Oh, William ! ”

I know that there are many very respectable persons, whose theory, as well as practice it is, to make all the impulses of passion and feeling, as well as all the varieties of action and attitude, obnoxious to the rules of etiquette—who can be joyous within limit, or most elegantly disconsolate, as the occasion may require—and to such I can have no apology to offer for the conduct of my heroine at this conjuncture. She received the friend and playmate of her childhood with an ecstasy truly barbarous—there is no denying the fact—she almost rushed into his arms—she hardly checked the kiss which he was presumptuous enough to snatch from her, and very faintly even on its repetition—her delight was outrageously unsophisticated and natural—it was, in fact, an Irish meeting “all over.”

When the “Kates,” and “Williams,” and “my goodnesses!” and “dear mees!” and bursts of laughter, and all the other delicious nothings in which this untamed affection is privileged to indulge itself on such occasions, had been nearly expended, Aylmer contemplated the face and figure of his young friend with greater attention,

and we shall now describe what he saw as accurately as possible.

He was not disappointed in any way by either the countenance or the person of his mistress (for as such, at the first glance, he had set her down), and yet though the one *was* beautiful, the former fell decidedly short of that standard. There was no exquisite combination of colour in the cheeks—no lilies and roses—no rubies—no diamonds, and yet the face itself was perfectly captivating. Her lips were thin, but eternally charged with an expression of arch gravity, or undisguised pleasure, which the restless heart supplied in such continual succession as totally to exclude all thought of considering their pretensions to mere material beauty. Her eye was grey, and shrewd, in its moments of comparative inaction, but full of fire, of passion, of mirth, of thought, of feeling, or of *fun*, according as those varying emotions were stirred up within her bosom. The whole countenance fell into a character of intensity and animation, which gave the fairest promise in the world of the evenness that might be expected from the

mind and temper. It was the veritable window to the heart, for which the philosophic braggart affected to sigh, and was only to be loved for the revealment of the spirit which was in it.—“She is not handsome, decidedly,” said the student to himself, after the elegant fashion of his compeers in T. C. D.; “she is none of your brick-and-mortar beauties—but I like her the better—there’s *vous* about her. ’Tis a well built forehead, too.”

The gentleman was no better satisfied with what he beheld in the person of the lady, than the lady was with that of the gentleman. She saw in the figure of her grown-up friend, a well-looking clever young fellow, rather under the stature of masculine beauty, and with, to a prophetic eye, a promise of rotundity, (*not* corpulency) in his person. His face was a good oval, indicative of strong intellect, but perhaps quite as much, or rather more so, of strong passion, his forehead round and resolute, his eyebrows so Melpomenish, that they would have given a moped and anxious air to his *masque*, if they were not corrected by the vigour and bustle of the eye beneath them: *that* was an

article of the greatest advantage to the character of the whole face. There was no affectation about it, and yet it was full of meaning, and had a frankness that was royal. His hair rather black, and doubtful whether it should curl or no, was thrown back on all sides in a kind of floating way, an arrangement that savoured too much of technicality, when it is considered that he was a haunter of Parnassus, and had moreover once upon a time been an accomplice in the perpetration of the "Historical Tragedy" of the "Battle of Aughrim," in a cock-loft near Smock Alley, "for charitable purposes," on which occasion he represented the heroic St. Ruth, who, as is pathetically narrated in the drama,

"A down a winding valley met his fall,
And died a victim to—a cannon ball!"

Aylmer was about to question his fair friend on the subject of her father, when the door again opened, and the old man entered. He advanced hurriedly to welcome his protégé, and scarcely looked at him, until he had grasped his hand, while his own, as Aylmer felt, trembled in the effort. He was about to

He spoke when his eyes fell full on Aylmer's person; he glanced quickly, and rather wildly over his dress and features; and the words of welcome stuck in his throat. He dropped the young man's hand, and shrunk back with a look of mingled wildness and distrust.

"Oh, father," exclaimed Kate, her eyes filling up, "won't you speak to William?"

"What is it, Kate?—Come near me, give me your arm, child."

"Oh, Mr. Fitzmaurice, is this my welcome home?"

"Father, dear father!"

"Let the candles be lighted in my room, the sky is darkening. God bless us! What ails you, Kate?—I am well, I am very well. Stand back, Aylmer!"

"I am not welcome then!"

"Stand back, I say! no....yes....welcome?... Kate, keep near me, my darling. You wrong me, young man, indeed you do!"

"How, sir?—O tell me!"

"May the great and merciful Lord of the universe forgive us all! Surely we are none of us without our weaknesses! William, do I de-

serve this of *you*? The night has fallen already:—Kate, come with me, and get candles in my room. Don't drag me down so, girl! I have weight enough upon me: this way;" and gathering the terrified and weeping girl closer to him, he hurried through the door, leaving Aylmer overwhelmed with wonder, indignation, and dismay.

It was some time before he heard any thing further of his host. The night had, as he remarked, fallen with much suddenness, and the indications of an approaching snow-storm began to make themselves evident in the thickening, greyish masses of cloud that drifted close overhead, so as speedily to spread themselves over the face of the heavens. As Aylmer looked from the parlour window, the dreariness of the change produced a chilling effect on his excited spirits for the moment, and served to check the resolution which he had formed, of instantly quitting the house and returning to Bally-Aylmer. He sat at the window, expecting the return of some of the family, and resolved if possible to obtain some elucidation of the extraordinary scene that had taken place.

He mused in this position for a considerable time, with no other sights or sounds to divert his mind from the anxiety that was gradually deepening around it, but the heavy whirring of the wind, as it swept over the whitening plain, the pattering of the snow and hail against the window panes, the cackling of poultry as they ran with expanded tails and disordered plumage right before the wind, to the shelter of the nearest turf-rick, the short dissatisfied grunt of the hog as he stumped it sturdily beneath the window towards the piggery, like a four-footed Caliban, driven in a sulk from his feast of "pignuts;" and in the intervals of the driving gusts, the solitary cry of a house-sparrow, at finding himself compelled to quit the exposed farm-yard, before his little crew was half stored with its thimbleful of the scattered grain, and retire supperless to roost for the night. All those appliances however, in Aylmer's present state of mind produced only the effect of throwing an additional gloom over his spirits, and filling his heart with wavering and flashing doubts, conjectures, and uncertainties, with which, until the present moment, he had never

been disturbed, and which even now resisted all his exertions to turn "them to shapes," and give them an assumed existence.

After he had waited a considerable time in fruitless expectation, his patience again became exhausted, and a feeling of deep and bitter indignation took possession of his mind. The disappointment which his young and ardent heart had met with in the very first burst of its affection, was calculated to sting more keenly on consideration. He had come to his home and his only friends after a nine years' absence, with a breast all glowing with love and ecstasy, and this was his welcome! A cold and almost repulsive greeting, a few short sentences of unprovoked reproach, left wholly unexplained by the utterer, and here he remained, apparently quite forgotten by the family, in a dreary apartment, without a sign of preparation or of kindness. It is in such moments as this that the orphan is most oppressed with the full and bitter sense of his situation, and though Ayler was the last disposed youth in the world to pule or whine, he could not help exclaiming to his own wounded heart, that it was not so

parents were wont to receive their long absent children.

The wormwood of this reflection had scarcely diffused itself over his mind, when the door opened gently and Katharine entered. Her eyes were red and moist, and her movements still retained much of the agitation into which she had been betrayed by the preceding scene. Her look of distress was sufficient to subdue all the resentful emotions which had sprung up in the mind of the student, and the tenderness with which he took her hand, and offered his consolations, would seem almost to imply a consciousness of blame, attributable to his own conduct. Kate, however, did not appear to view the matter in this light: she was the bearer of her father's apologies, and joined to his her own entreaties, that he would endeavour to forget what had passed, and remain the night at Kilavariga. The old man was still, she said, ill to an alarming degree; in fact he had spoken so wildly on many occasions of late, that she sometimes feared—and a shivering of her whole frame, and a momentary glance of horror com-

pleted the sentence which her lips refused to utter.

The probability of this startling suspicion darted on Aylmer's mind with all the force of truth, and he was instantly struck with a feeling of remorse at the selfishness of his resentment. He affected, however, to make very light of the conjecture, and succeeded in restoring his young friend to some degree of composure before they separated for the evening.

Aylmer used somewhat more care than usual in making his toilet the next morning, without, perhaps, being himself conscious of any motive for unusual decoration. And by a curious coincidence enough, a similar degree of care and taste had been called into use in the female department of the family, with, doubtless, a similar innocence of intention. Miss Fitzmaurice was patriotic even in her gowns, skirts and bodies; (are not our names correct, ladies?)—and she did not depart from her national principle even on this occasion. Her dress consisted of a grave-coloured Dublin tabinet, bound tight around the waist, (as was the fashion then

and there), with a broad riband, a plain muslin collar, (is this right too?) as white as this fair paper which we are blotting with her description, lying close and flat upon the *gorge* at either side: and that was all the finery about her.

When the young collegian descended, he found Fitzmaurice and his daughter already occupying their places by the blazing turf fire in the breakfast parlour; the one domestically occupied in cutting up a large *brick* of home-made pan-bread into slices for toast, the other plunged deep into the columns of the last Dublin Evening Post. Both received him cheerfully, and no allusion whatsoever was made to the occurrence of the preceding evening. Whatever lingering of mental weakness the old man might yet labour under, it was soon banished by the frank and buoyant spirits of the young student, who appeared to have, and, in fact, at the time *had*, banished from his mind all thought or recollection of his ungentle reception.

During the progress of their morning meal Ayler detailed circumstantially his adventure among the sheep-stealers the second evening

before, and Fitzmaurice called to mind what he had already heard with indifference, a complaint of his herdsman, made on the previous morning, respecting the loss of a fat wether from the long walk. The consequence of the communication was a resolution, on the part of the young man, to lodge informations at once before Mr. Geoffrey Hasset, an estated gentleman and a magistrate, who resided within a few miles of Bally-Aylmer. The old man acquiesced in the proposal as soon as it was made, not that he entertained any longing for justice on his own despoilers, but feeling a satisfaction at the idea that he might thus be rid of the eternal charges of apathy and indolence which were very freely dealt forth by his aged steward, without the necessity of any active personal exertion. Miss Fitzmaurice, too, encouraged the enterprize, as she would have done any other, which was likely to occasion some little variety and bustle of circumstance in the monotonous thrum-thrum of Kilavariga life.

Forth accordingly fared our hero; and a few hours riding brought him within view of the little village, at a gentlemanlike distance from

which the clumsy bulk of Hasset-Ville stood, like a *cock-throw*, on the summit of a round, squat hillock near the sea-side, with a few lean-looking elms and elder-trees at the rear, which served only to make "barrenness visible."

An unusual commotion had been occasioned in the village by the expected return of the lord of the soil, the above named Mr. Hasset, who had just given his tenantry the first specimen of the benefits of absenteeism since the Union. The loyalty of the parish was fully manifested by the efforts made on the part of its inhabitants to receive their monarch with suitable enthusiasm. As his carriage turned the angle of a rock, some miles distant from his seat, the sound of all manner of villanous instruments rattling away to an inspiring national planxty, announced the approach of the villagers, and in a few minutes he was encountered by their advanced guard, a mounted deputation, headed by a lame carpenter, who filled his seat on the bony ridge of a wall-eyed, unfed gelding's back, with the dignity of an orderly on a field-day; and with the resignation of a martyr. The music

being hushed for the moment into a delicious silence, and the open carriage drawn up, the schoolmaster of the village inflicted a harangue on the occupant, which was borne with gracious patience, and suitably acknowledged ; after which, with tremendous yells, the crowd bounded on the carriage, emancipated the four-footed cattle, cashiered the postillions, and fastening two ropes on either side, hurried the lumbering vehicle along the rough and stony road, with a velocity which caused an expression of real alarm to take place of the smiling condescension which had before diffused itself over the gracious countenance of the proprietor. As they whirled him along, amid terrific shouts, and bursts of wild laughter, toward the demesne gate, the walls and the way-side were lined with gaping and noisy crowds, principally composed of the younger urchins, whose scantiness of stature obliged them to make shift in this manner. One of these had clambered up a gate-pier, and sitting cross-legged on the back of a stone monkey, secured his seat by passing his arm round the neck of the dilapidated pug ; while with the

other he twirled his little hareskin cap above his head, and added his share of noisy triumph to the general voice.

Preparations having been made for the day's amusements some time previously, there was no pause, no lack of enjoyment after the first burst of welcome had been exhausted. The demesne was opened freely to all who chose to mingle in the glee of the time. Tables were spread before the wooden rustic seats which were scattered through the grounds, and in the interval of the festive preparation, those who chose to witness or partake in the sports were summoned to a smooth plot before the drawing-room window, which was fixed on as the scene of contention for those who chose to put in their claims for the several prizes, which the liberality of the proprietor supplied for the occasion. The great personage was, himself, at the moment, enjoying the scene from the open casement.

Aylmer had formed one of this last mentioned group for a considerable time, and joined heartily in the bursts of laughter which broke from the delighted rustics, at the various spectacles of fun which were presented to them; the

racing of old women on their *grugs* for a cotton *hankitcher*—the grinning through a horse-collar—and many other sports which it would require the pen of the author of the *Æneid* to celebrate with poetical justice. Suddenly a voice close at his elbow startled him; he turned quickly round, and gazed on the speaker, who, unconscious that he was observed, repeated an exclamation of delight and applause, while the tones of the voice thrilled through the nerves of the student with a momentary influence of terror: a glance at the countenance was sufficient to satisfy him,—he laid his hand softly over the fellow's shoulder, and fixing a strong gripe on the breast of his blue frieze coat, dragged him back from the ring.

The scene was instantly changed. The man struggled to free himself from Aylmer's hold, but the latter clenched his hand the faster; and there was a consciousness about the stranger's efforts which enfeebled his strength, and beat him down almost to a level in point of bodily power with his captor. Astonished at the sudden confusion, Mr. Hasset disappeared from the open window, and presently hurried forth

upon the lawn, followed by the seneschal of the parish, and a posse of domestics.

"Murder! murder! Is there nobody for the O'Deas?" exclaimed the prisoner.

"Man alive! let go your houl!" shouted a young countryman, shaking a smoke-dried black-thorn at Aylmer's head.

"Will no one help me to secure a thief and robber? Ha!—Mr. Hasset!"

"Lewy—Oh! Lewy—darling, must it be this way with us?"

"Let go your hold!"

"Help! help! for justice——"

Before another instant Aylmer lay senseless on the earth; and in the same space a well-directed blow from behind had done the same rough office for Lewy.

"*Shasthone!* Sandy Culhane, stick by the master!"

"Aizy, av you plaze!" cried Sandy, after he had fixed a similar gripe on the sheep-stealer's throat, to that which his young master had been so unceremoniously compelled to relinquish: "Wasn't it in high time I come?—Mr. Hasset, here's your prisoner."

“What has he done?”

“’Pon my life that’s more than I can tell—only it’s something, no doubt, and the master to saize him,—stand a one side, some o’ ye, and let us rise him a little—there—poh! it’s nothen. What is it the villin’s done to you, master Will, darling? Mr. Hasset wants to know——”

“Better ask questions within—keep both these men in custody—and remove the young gentleman into the house; he does not appear conscious yet.”

“He isn’t himself rightly, sure enough; for the eye do be shutting and opening upon me as if it was blind—mark. Indeed I’m but a poor hand at a *kippen* in a fight, and to say that born rogue is able to walk already;” as he observed the younger prisoner led off without much assistance, together with his companion, toward the house.

The orders of the magistrate were put in execution, and Aylmer, still half stupified from the effects of his hurt, though not seriously injured, was assisted to the house by two of the domestics.

It was not long before Aylmer had sufficiently

recovered himself to identify the mountain marauder, and to explain to the wondering administrator of petty justice the cause and manner of the extraordinary scene which had passed before him.

"And it was by Mr. Fitzmaurice's good will that you came to lodge informations this way again' me, was it?" said the sheep-stealer, when Aylmer had concluded.

"He certainly will not be sorry to hear that a thief has been brought to justice."

"Justice, inagh? O, it's justice Cahill is looking after, is it? Why, then, the Vergin speed him,—and tell him from me that he'll come by more of it than he's bargaining for, may be."

"What do you mean, ruffian?"

"Is it asken me what I mane, you are? Aizy. Tell Cahill-cruv-darug, that Lewy Histin, Vauria Histin's first cousin, that is rearing her this way, said it'll be a sore day for him the day that Lewy enters Tralee gaol, barring he doesn't enter it at all, on his informations."

"You may be very well satisfied that insolence like this will do you no good with my friend."

"May be not, then. Only you asked me fét

I meant, you see, and I told you plain, out. Tell Cahill I said, fot hurt was it to draw the blood of a little wether, in comparishun of an old friend's?—And see if Cahill will ask you what I mane, do."

As Aylmer was turning away with an expression of disgust, the prisoner seemed suddenly to call something to mind, and plunging his rough hand into the pocket of his frieze, drew from it a dingy piece of paper, folded and watered like a letter, which, after sundry efforts to rub it white again with the sleeve of his coat, a process which by no means improved its appearance, he handed to the young gentleman. Notwithstanding its piteous condition Aylmer was able to recognize the letter which he had received from the unknown stranger in the mountains, and the recognition became immediately manifest on his countenance. It did not escape the observation of the prisoner.

"Aye—it's the very same, indeed. You left it in the old Caroline as it was drying before the fire, and you see how honest and safe I *kep* it, although 'tis unknown to me whother there baint a halter for meself within in it."

The magistrate, who had been, during the above conversation, buried alive in a digest, now broke in upon it, to declare his conviction of the sufficiency of the evidence to warrant a committal. This was made out accordingly, and Aylmer, declining a handsome invitation to stay the evening, returned the often neglected letter to his pocket, without even looking at its superscription, and prepared to depart.

"You'll not forget to take my words to Mr. Fitzmaurice, sir?" said the sheep-stealer.

"I shall tell him what you have said, as you seem to desire it, although I think it would be better for yourself that I should be silent on the subject."

"Not at all, indeed!—O, no. Do you mark my words for it, Cahill will say 'yes' to my bidding; and a wise man he'll be when he says that. If he won't say it, come to me again, and I'll tell you a story that it concerns your father's child to hear."

The few sentences which had been dropt in the mountain-hut by the prisoner and his female companion, now recurred to Aylmer's mind; and as he proceeded along, on his way home—

ward, (accompanied by Sandy Culhane,) the uncertain and uneasy feeling of mingled anger, fear, and curiosity, excited as it had since been by the scene of the evening before, pressed itself upon him with an almost irresistible force. Fully convinced as he was that the threats and insinuations of the man originated in mere malice, he could not yet restrain the ardent, and, to himself, unaccountable longing which he felt to search the matter to the very heart, and pluck the plain truth from its hiding-place. Although he had not yet thought long enough upon the subject to encourage even a shadow of momentary suspicion, the misty and uncertain doubts which he had flung from him with indignation on their first occurrence, now crowded back upon his mind, and tortured his imagination with vague and cloudy apprehensions of some approaching horror, while his excited fancy wasted itself in idle efforts to discover what that horror could be.

As he approached the house, the appearance of a muff and bonnet at a little distance directed his meditations into another channel. He dismounted, gave his horse to Sandy, who looked

a volume of wit and prophecy, as he saw his young master vault over the stile, and run along the walk toward his mistress. He leaned with his arm across the saddle for a few moments, and continued with mouth expanded, and smiling, gazing in the direction of the youthful couple, whom he had already paired together by anticipation in "the incommunicable tie." Aylmer ran for some time before he overtook Miss Fitzmaurice; she had the coquetry to quicken her pace as he approached, and at last feigned a fair flight, which gave opportunity to a world of laughing, romping, and adjusting of pélerine and tresses, when she was overtaken. Then there was a pretty battle about accepting his arm; she drew her little white hand from the muff, and with a sweet shrinking of the frame, as she felt the cold air, plunged it again into its warm nestling-place, from which, however, she was finally induced to withdraw it, and submit to her fate with the air of a martyr. None of these manœuvres, delicate and fine-drawn as the sentiment was in which they originated, were lost on Sandy.

"Isn't it 'cute she is, then, for all?" he muttered

in soliloquy, as the lovers, arm in arm, glided off and disappeared in a turning of the walk. "E'then, do, look away," he continued, addressing the horse, whose eyes happened to be turned in the same direction, and patting the animal on the face, "indeed it's no use for you to be throwing the eye after them. 'Tis to Bally-Aylmer she'll be going before long, mistress of yourself, and meself, and all belongen to us, my hand and word to you, ma copuleen-beg." And flinging himself lazily over the back of the animal, he turned off in the direction of the avenue, quickening his pace a little as the lengthening shadows, cast by the hedge-rows across the plain, gave intimation of the approaching nightfall, for Sandy had no wish to be overtaken by darkness on his way, in a country so haunted as his was with smugglers, peep-o'-day boys, fairies, ghosts, headless equipages, and revenue officers. This excessive precaution may not appear to coincide with the account given of Sandy's prowess in the forenoon; but the fact was, that as there are many men who endeavour to conceal a conscious timidity beneath the affectation of non-chalance and brag-

gadocio, so Sandy, on the contrary, was gifted with a much hardier temperament than he himself believed, or was willing to allow. His general anxiety to avoid danger was not merely assumed, but it was never suffered to be evident except in circumstances where no real peril existed. He was naturally nervous, and fond of quiet; but when once convinced that promptitude and exertion were absolutely necessary to his personal safety, or to that of any other individual in whom he was interested, he seemed by a sudden impulse to start into a totally different being, and many instances were recorded of his heroic prowess, while under the influence of these chronic affections of valour, which would not have been unworthy the most daring spirit in the neighbourhood. Sandy, however, was by no means vainglorious, and dreading above all things a reputation for valour, on account of the many troubles he feared it might induce, he invariably disclaimed in his cooler moments all merit for that which he had performed, as he believed, under the impulse of some supernatural agency.

As he turned into the avenue, he was sud-

denly accosted by a man who, from his position in a corner of the way, appeared to have been awaiting him for some time—he stepped quickly out upon the road, and laid his hand on the horse’s bridle.

“Culhane, stop! I have some questions to ask.”

“Blessed saints! but you startled the heart within me, sir! Isn’t it a droll way, that, for you to make out upon a body, as if it was *itself* that was there.”

“No nonsense now, Sandy, we have too much business on our hands. Have you seen old Evans?”

“I did your honour’s bidding. But he says, the only way for him, says he, is to deliver himself, round and sound, before the judge at the next assizes, and tell the whole story out o’ the face. It’s the greatest nonsens in life for him to be afeerd, for though the warrant is still out against him, all the evidence is scattered and lost, and moreover the affair is forgotten a long time now: so that he had best make one bould stroke for his own again.”

The stranger seemed lost in meditation for some time, then suddenly accosted Sandy—

"And the affair here at Kilavariga, how does it go on, Sandy?"

"Why thin, smooth enough. I seen himself and herself funnen together a while ago, like two that would be coorten, and not far from the end of it, neither. Av they don't have a hauling home before next Sherrove, call me an honest man."

"Never, by this book!" * exclaimed the stranger, with vehemence, slapping his hand upon the pommel of the saddle, "I'll prevent that, at all events."

"And what do you say to Mr. Evans's advice?"

"We'll talk of that another time. You will take care to be in the way to-morrow, and let our friend Alley have a bed for me to-night, and keep the fire awake until I return, whatever hour that may be."

"But I have something more to tell you—" Sandy called out, in an under-tone, as he saw the stranger prepare to depart.

* It does not necessarily follow, when an Irishman swears "by this book," that the object which he indicates shall be a book, or have any relation to it. The oath is a very usual one.

"Reserve it for this evening, or to-morrow."

"'Tis rigarden the Histins."

"Hang them all up, high! I want to hear little more of them now."

The reiterated "But, sir," of Sandy, was lost upon the retreating colloquist, who, as it then appeared, had taken his departure in good time to escape observation, if, as his manner indicated, he were in reality anxious to avoid it. As Sandy turned his horse's head to proceed towards the house, he encountered the plump, little, rosy-cheeked maiden whom we have before mentioned as one of the household of the Fitzmaurices. An Irishman, of whatever rank or grade he may be, thinks it always a serious part of his duty, whenever he meets a woman alone, to begin with a compliment, be it good or bad.

"It's comen out rubben snow-balls to your cheeks you do be, this way, that makes 'em so rosy, I'll be bound," with a smile which he intended should be an arch one.

"Never mind Norry's cheeks, whether they do be rosy, or no," replied the fair one, with a smile that dimpled them into the similitude of

buds half-blown, and which, at the same time, confessed that the flattery had not been thrown away (when has it ever been?)—"only come, as fast as hops, to the master, and don't unsaddle the horse, for he's going to send you of a message."

"A'then, what's the murder now, Norry, eroo?"

"All on the 'count of young master Aylmer, thin. He to come in and to give tidings to the master about how he took the Histins, the sheep-stalers, and to make out a narraytion o' what Lewy Histin, the born-rogue, said concerning the master—and the master to be taken ill, just as he was, there isn't only a day there sence, when he seen Mr. Aylmer in the sailor's clothes. The master is like an innocent, mad intirely above in his bed-room, and the young missiz with him, fare he's callen for you, all so fast, there's half an hour there sence."

"It's a droll bizness, Norry, isn't it?" said Sandy, as he dismounted, and placing the bridle rein on the hasp of the kitchen door, followed his fair conductress into the house.

In the mean time Aylmer was left in the par-

lour, to ruminate on this repetition of the wonders of the previous evening. He could scarcely persuade himself that all this could be fortuitous, and the deep and festering suspicion had already begun to lodge itself upon his heart, and to darken on his brow, and in his eye, when it was again met, and disabled by a piece of frankness on the part of his guardian. He had, after the first access of agitation had gone by, freely admitted the occasion in which it originated: Those very Histins were the only persons present, when the fatal dispute took place between him and Robert Aylmer, and his young friend surely could not be surprised, that so powerful a remembrancer of that dreadful night, that night which had been to him the cause of so much grief, shame, and suffering, (not the least of which might be accounted the loss of an old and dearly loved associate,) should exercise a more than ordinary influence upon his spirits. Aylmer could not but be affected by the justice of this representation, as well as by the agony of mind in which it was delivered by the sufferer; and he had separated from him and his daughter, after a thousand assurances of

perfect confidence and affection, and various efforts at condolence, which, however, the old man seemed to receive, as was most natural, with sufficient impatience.

Still, however, there was a restlessness and a working at his heart, a craving and hungry curiosity, which told him there was much yet to be learned, and resisted his efforts to persuade himself that he was satisfied. While he leaned on a table near the window, which looked into the yard, he heard the clattering of a horse's feet over the pavement, and presently after the voice of Sandy, addressing some words of grumbling indignation to some person near him, and alternating his complaints, as was his manner when under any excitation, with snatches of an old piece of chimney-corner croonery.

"A fine time o' night, it is indeed, to be senden one a lonesome road off to Hasset-Ville, all a' one the day isn't long enough. Stand aizy, you ugly baste (to the horse). And the O'Deas, the Histins' faction voven vengeance agin me airly and late, for given Lewy to the law."

"To Hasset-Ville!" said Aylmer, starting

from his seat, and looking out into the yard, where Sandy stood tightening the girths of the horse, and grumbling and singing, alternately.

*" There was an old 'oman toss'd up in a blanket
Seventy times as high as the moon,
Fare she was—"*

" Aye, and the rivinue min out, too, not knowen is it for a smuggler they'll take me."

*" Fare she was goen I couldn't emagine
But in her hand—"*

" To shoot me, may be, unknownst, murder !"

" But in her hand she carried a broom."

" Isn't it what they done to Tim Dalton, near the cross in the bog, and I have to pass that cross too, and in the dark, fare they say Tim do be goen about with his head under his arm, doen penance, in regard of cutting corn of a retrenched holliday ; murder."

*" Ould 'oman, ould 'oman, ould 'oman, sis I
Erra, fare are you goen up so high ?
To sweep the cobwebs off o' the sky,
And av—"*

He was cut short in the melody by Aylmer, who threw up the window, and beckoned him close underneath.

"Who is sending you to Hasset-Ville, Sandy?"

"Himself thin."

"With what message?"

"With a letter, see, in regard o' the Histins, and I abn't to show my face, av I don't deliver it to-night—a poor case."

The recollection of the prisoner's words instantly flashed on Aylmer. This was a message for their liberation! There was a ground for the man's threat! Aylmer paused a moment, like one who has received a stunning blow, then addressing Sandy—

"Would you wish to have a brace of pistol bullets in your brain before morning?"

"O fie! murder! master William darlen, fot do you mane?"

"That you must not, as you value your life, go to Hasset-Ville to-night. Take the horse off to Bally-Aylmer, and have him ready for me to-morrow morning. In the mean time keep the letter safe, until you are called upon to deliver it up."

"And what'll I say to Mr. Fitzmaurice, sir,

when he'll ax me concarnen his orders to-morrow?"

"Keep out of his sight altogether, and I will take all the blame upon my own shoulders."

"Murder! murder! but it's a droll story," muttered Sandy, secretly rejoiced in his heart at the countermand, "I'll do your honour's bidden any way, without any questions. Allilu, murder alive!" and off he rode in very merry humour, leaving his young master in a state of mind by no means similar.

On inquiring from a servant, Aylmer learned that the old man still continued ill, and that he had even requested his daughter to retire to her apartment, and leave him alone for the night. The young student's wish, in the first heat of his agitation at the discovery he had made, was to instantly fathom the motives of the old man, in a personal interview, but a moment's consideration suggested to him the propriety and advantage of a little caution. He resolved to use every exertion in his power to obtain something like a corroboration, if not confirmation, of his doubts. He took the light

from the hands of the servant, and proceeded with a loaded and anxious heart toward his sleeping room.

Before we proceed to detail the occurrences of the night, it may be necessary to say something in the way of apology to the enlightened reader, for what must at first sight appear to be a childish and thread-bare assay on his credulity, more particularly as some little efforts have been hitherto made, to give the narrative a hue of verisimilitude. We beg to disclaim any such unworthy purpose, and only, like faithful chroniclers, record every event, be it wonderful or otherwise, even when we are ourselves unable to find a cause for it, "in our philosophy." It will be much the better way, if the reader will suffer his judgment to travel quietly along with the narrative, suspending it where it is offended by improbability, and awaiting the occurrence of fresh incidents to atone for, and explain the past.

The side of the bed in which Ayler slept was placed towards a large window, at about two yards' distance, and the room itself was large, and half wrapt in gloom, on which the

light which he held in his hand had but a very partial influence. Perceiving that the moonlight fell with an unusual brightness, (the natural consequence of the snow showers which had covered the ground, and the roofs of the houses within the last few days), upon his bed and immediately around it, Aylmer threw down the heavy, dark curtains on that side, and after having endeavoured to compose his mind to prayer, proceeded to undress. In the progress of this ceremony, he happened to put his hand into the pocket in which he had deposited the mountain stranger's letter. He resolved, at length, now that he was perfectly at leisure, to examine it. The superscription, though half erased by the rain and ill usage, was still sufficiently legible to satisfy him that it was directed to himself, and with a passing emotion of surprise at the stupidity of the man, who took so little trouble to make himself certain into whose hands he was committing the paper, he broke the wafer, and read the following words :

“ Mr. Robert aylmur. sir, there Is A Scame goen on bee Tune Cahil-cruv-darug an His daatur For you to mary Her, and make Her missis

uv bally ayl Mur. william deer dont Take the
hand Thats redd wit your fathers Blood. If
you Wont bee sed be mee yool heer moar in
Time frum

an Ould follyer o The famalee."

With something less of persevering industry than might have enabled him to make tolerable progress in the far-famed Babylonian slab, Aylmer contrived to extract the above from the strange mass of hieroglyphics which the letter presented to him. Had he opened the paper but one day sooner, he would have flung it from him with contempt, and thought no more of its contents; but the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours had left his mind in such a state of excitation, that he would have caught with eagerness at a much more slender clue to an explanation. The suspicion was not, at all events, peculiar to his own breast, and it seemed to be more than a suspicion with some. He determined, as he had at length obtained a guide, that he would thrid this labyrinth to its centre, and after muttering this resolve between

his teeth, he extinguished the light, and threw himself on the bed.

Still it was long before he could sleep. After exhausting all the customary modes of inducing slumber, without producing the desired effect, trying in vain the right side, and the left side, and the right again—pummelling the innocent pillow, and railing in heart at the equally innocent chambermaid, he fairly abandoned himself to his waking meditations, and gave up the attempt to conquer his restlessness altogether. This show of non-resistance, however, he soon found, was the very surest mode of achieving triumph in such a case. Sleep, like good fortune, is not always to be taken by a *coup de main*—she will more frequently shed her blessings on the brain that is neglectful of her, than on that which is busy in devising means to accomplish her favour. He lay gazing on the curtain, which the moonlight rendered almost transparent, suffering thought after thought to glide quietly through his brain, each waxing fainter than the other, until at length the power of discrimination became inert, and consciousness

itself began to fade away into that soft and gentle delirium which precedes the access of perfect mental repose, and forms one of the most luxurious and exquisite enjoyments which the weary spirit can receive from the absence of active exertion. His eyelids were just drooping, and the visual faculty itself was just dormant, when he was suddenly startled by observing the shadow of a human figure, thrown upon the bed-curtain that hung between him and the window. It flitted across, and was lost, almost before he had sufficiently roused himself to be certain that it was not a creation of his fancy. After drawing the curtains aside, and demanding "Who was there?" without receiving any reply, he dropped them again, and in the moment of their fall, as they rattled on their brass rings, his ear caught, or fancied it caught, a sound like the turning of a door-handle. He listened again, but "heard nothing only the silence." Satisfied that his auricular, as well as his optical senses, had been playing the antic with him, he flung himself back on the bed, and was speedily lost in the world of dreams.

In a short time his visions assumed a turbu-

lent and anxious, though rather whimsical air. They were crowded with all the horrors of the three last days. He dreamt first that the letter before mentioned was written in Greek, and that Doctor —, one of his college superiors, was rating him for not being able to read it off at sight—that it suddenly changed into Gaelic, and the Doctor into Mr. Fitzmaurice, who seized him by the throat, and plunged him into a bog-hole, where he attempted to stifle him, while in endeavouring to remonstrate, he could do nothing himself but bark and bay like a hound, until at length a burst of laughter from his tormentor made him look up, when he saw that it was his own dead father who stood above him. He was impressed with this conviction from no other evidence than the arbitrary feeling of a dream, for he neither remembered his father's countenance, nor was there in that of the vision the least resemblance to any one that he had ever seen. The terror which the sight occasioned him went on deepening in rapid gradations until an oppression seized him which proceeded almost to a point of suffocation. It was, in fact, a fit of actual nightmare which had

been induced, and he speedily fell into that state of mental consciousness, and mental as well as bodily impotence, which constitutes one of the most terrific stages of the disease. His brow and limbs became bathed with perspiration in the vain efforts which he made to relieve himself. His eyes opened, and he distinctly saw the material objects which surrounded him; yet the visions of his sleep not only in part continued, but began to assume a frantic sort of reality, from the manner in which they became combined with those objects. His waking eyes began to take the part of his yet unregulated and delirious fancy, and he beheld, or at least strongly imagined he beheld, the figure of an old man standing by his bedside, holding back the curtain with one hand, while the other hung in perfectly motionless repose by his side. His form was so placed, that the dreamer could see little more than the strongly-marked outline of the shape and face, which the intercepted moonlight had pencilled out with the most perfect distinctness, and mellowed by a silver line of light, which corrected its harshness, while it revealed its character and expression in all their

vigour. By degrees Aylmer's glance became settled, and fixed itself full upon the figure. The lips, which were before parted with an expression of kindness, began to move at length, and another of the young man's senses was called in to bear testimony to the reality of the appearance.

"I am come to warn you, William Aylmer, of a danger in which you are placed. Listen to me, for it is your father that speaks to you."

The young man attempted to stretch out his hands, and speak, but the effort failed, and the words died in indistinct murmurs upon his lips.

"Listen, but do not speak," continued the figure, "for the night is flying fast, and the clouds are already grey in the east. You have heard of your father's death—the hand that plunged him living into the waters, was that of Cahil Fitzmaurice. Beware of him, for he called himself my friend for five and twenty years, and yet was not ashamed to take me unawares in an hour of weakness and of sin. He sought my life while I staggered in drunkenness upon the deck that I had died with unatoned blood."

Aylmer's countenance expressed the horror mingled with curiosity which this last intimation had excited within him. His informant perceived the meaning of the gesture, and proceeded:—

“In that affair Cahil had no part. I had taken out the vessel unaccompanied by him, and in the enterprize that followed, the blood of a king's servant was shed. We thought more of the peril, then, than of the crime. I have since learned to think more of the crime than of the peril. Mine was not the hand, thank Heaven, that dealt the blow, nor mine the tongue that directed it; but in me, nevertheless, the guilt originated, and the hand of Fitzmaurice only anticipated the vengeance of the law. But these things are past. I have come now to warn you of another matter. Avoid the company of your guardian's daughter! Let all things rest as they are, at least for two months, in the space of which time you shall see me again. Till then, touch not her hand, nor listen to her voice, as you value your parent's peace. To Fitzmaurice I would have you say ——”

The slapping of a door in another apartment suddenly cut short the intended commission, and as the figure

“ started, like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons—”

Aylmer had a momentary view of the face, as the moon shone full upon it. There was an appearance of age, a paleness in the complexion, probably heightened by the peculiar light, and long flaxen locks depending around either temple. The expression of the countenance, during the instant, was that of anxiety and intense attention. On a repetition of the sound, the strange midnight visitor dropt the curtain which he had been holding, and with a low and gentle farewell blessing, uttered with the softest and kindest tone in the world, such as the lip of a parent alone can breathe, and the heart of a child alone can appreciate, the appearance fled.

Aylmer, in the effort which he made to detain the vision, both by voice and action, found that his nightmare had completely left him, and that, in fact, he had been lying wide awake for a con-

siderable time, though consciousness had stolen by such imperceptible gradations upon him, that he could not tell at what period of the scene. that passed he had been waking, and when he slept. It did not, however, escape the metaphysical eye of the young collegian, that the bed curtain had become wrinkled in the grasp of the spectre, precisely in the same manner as it would have done if the limb had been composed of mere material flesh and blood. He sprung from the bed, and rushed in the direction by which the appearance had departed. There was no person in the room, but a little search satisfied him that there existed no necessity either for a sliding panel, or the other resource, an impassible state of being, to aid his visitor's flight, for the room door stood ajar. It certainly was a very vulgar exit for a ghost, but the probability that it had been used was more than feasible.

The morning broke before Aylmer was enabled to subdue, in any degree, the feverish excitement which this occurrence had induced. The dawn was cold and comfortless, and the

cold drifts of snow, amid which it was ushered in, prolonged the greyish mistiness of its twilight a considerable space beyond its customary duration. Without waiting to form any resolution as to the immediate line which it would be necessary for him to pursue, further than might be suggested by the feverish impulse of the moment, and with his heart and mind and frame all glowing and trembling with the energy of the terrific discovery which he had chanced upon, he found himself hurrying almost instinctively along the passage which led to the sleeping room of Fitzmaurice, in a distant corner of the building. The chamber of the murderer! —his father's murderer! He scarcely knew—he never once thought of asking himself what his design was in thus breaking in upon the morning slumbers of the old man; but he had an indistinct, unsifted motive within his breast, which prompted him to take the criminal (if the spirit had not lied), by surprise, and startle the truth from its resting-place within his soul. A sensation too, perhaps, similar to that which is uttered by the ill-fated Danish prince, in a

situation of equal perplexity, might have mingled itself with this undefined purpose:—

“——The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil ; and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape ; yea—and, perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy
(As he is very potent with such spirits),
Abuses me, to damn me: I'll have grounds
More relative than this——”

The sudden “Who’s there?” that struck his ear as he stirred the door-handle, showed him that the old man had not been surprised in slumber by the awaking day. Without making any answer, he burst in tremulous agitation into the apartment, when the excess of feeling which swelled his bosom and rushed into his throat, compelled him to stop for one moment, and almost gasp for breath. He flung himself at last into an arm-chair by the bed-side, where he lay back for a few moments, oppressed almost to suffocation with the host of fearful and conflicting sensations that had been stirred up within him. The horror of his guardian’s crime—the memory of all his kindness—pity for his present sufferings, and the natural instinct that prompted him to the course of justice, all contended for

mastery within his soul, and made havoc of the region in their strife. It was the first time that the spear had been struck into the dwelling-place of his stormy passions, and they bounded from their hold with all the ungovernable fury which the novelty and fierceness of the excitement was calculated to produce. The old man had flung back the bed-curtain, and sitting erect, gazed with an expression of amazement, of terror, and cruel anxiety, upon the strange emotion in his young friend. Fear, and (an uncharitable observer might say) an instinctive consciousness of its cause, prevented his questioning the latter, on whom his wild, flickering gaze continued to direct itself, while he waited with panting heart, gaping lips, and cheeks and brow made cadaverous with the dread of the coming horror, for the first speech of the youth.

At length their glances met, and the effect was electrical. Rising slowly to his feet, and uplifting his clenched hand above his head, while that and every other member of his frame shook with convulsive energy, and his voice became thick and hoarse, and his eyes grew red and watery with passion, he said:—

“ Cahill Fitzmaurice, confess to your God and to me, for the time is come at length. You are the murderer of my father !”

A low muttering groan, and then a gurgling in the throat of the accused, were the only answer which the accuser received. The curtain fell from the hand of the former, and he lay back motionless on the bed. Fully prepared, as he had been, for the conviction of guilt, which the seeming criminal's conscience thus afforded, its effect on Aylmer was not the less powerful when it flashed upon him in all its certainty. He felt a sickness at the heart, a sudden shooting at the eyes, and a reeling in the brain, which nearly made him stagger from his balance. Pressing both hands close upon his brow, as if to crush the burning thoughts that were rioting within, he hurried out of the chamber, just as Miss Fitzmaurice, in a night-dress and slippers, and with a countenance full of alarm, entered it by another door.

When he reached his own apartment, he gave full vent to the whirlwind of emotions which he had been endeavouring to restrain during the last half-hour, and flung himself upon the bed

in a convulsion of feeling. It was one of these great and extraordinary occasions which, occurring when the character is matured by time and experience, serve only to strengthen or call forth its peculiarities, and wear their channels deeper in the heart; but which, when they come into contact with a youthful, undecided, and susceptible mind, can shake it to its very foundation, and mark its course for good or ill through life. The young man, who had lain down to rest the evening before, a raw, unformed, unfledged spirit, now rose from the bed, a fiery, austere, and resolute being, with a shadow of sternness and gloom struck into his heart, which clung to it during all his after-life.

After the first shock of his agitation was at an end, and he had, not without a passing emotion of shame at his own weakness, reduced his over-wrought spirits into some degree of calmness, he determined instantly to repair to Bally-Aylmer, and there deliberate on the course which it would be necessary for him to adopt. He flung his *loody* about him, and regardless of the snow which drifted in large flakes into his face, he proceeded towards his family residence.

In the mean time, Katharine had hurried to the bedside of her parent. She had been awakened from her light sleep in the apartment next his (which she always occupied,) by the first sound of Aylmer's entering; and unknowing the cause of the intrusion, while she felt indignant that any disturbance should be made in his chamber at that early hour, she hurried on some careless additions to her night dress, and entered the room at the very moment the door closed on Aylmer's receding figure. Her anxieties being, in the first place, aroused for the immediate condition of the old man, she walked rapidly to the bed, and removing the hangings, discovered, in the grey morning light, a spectacle that made her heart recoil with horror. He lay, half supported by the head of the bed, his jaw hanging, and his eyes, watery and motionless, fixed in a stare of stolid terror upon the ground, his forehead covered with a death-like moisture, and his cheeks and lips tinged with the cold, bluish colour which is cast over the features in the extreme agony, and is recognized as the liveried hue of the grave. Uttering a

half-suppressed scream of anguish, the affrighted girl wound one arm around the head of her parent, and supported it upon her bosom, while she pressed the other in an agony of suspense upon his heart. The organ of life had suspended its function for a short time, and was now, throb after throb, slowly resuming its office.

The chamber-door soon after opened, and Norry hurried to the assistance of her mistress. While the latter endeavoured to recal sensation by the usual physical applications and resources, sprinkling the face with cold water, chafing the temples, and placing the body in a horizontal position, the unsophisticated attendant took the more effectual course of forcing open the stiff clenched fingers of the right hand, and making the sign of the cross with her thumb upon the palm. This feat accomplished, she stood thumping her bosom, and awaiting its effect in perfect faith, at the bed's foot.

“ Don't mind any more o' the water, Miss Cauthleen; the little criss-crass I made in his hand, will soon lift him out o' the fit: it's the gentlemen, God speed 'em, (here she crossed

herself, and curtsied with much devotion,) that were wanten to hoise him away with them this mornen."

"Hush! hush! girl—fall back out of the light—he is recovering, God be thanked and praised!"

"Guilty—aye—guilty!" muttered the still unconscious object of their solicitude.

"God save us! Do you hear him, Miss?"

"His senses are wandering yet."

"Where—where is he? Kate, my girl, you shall bear witness to this—call him! call him back!"

"Whom, my dear father?—William?"

"Mister Aylmer is gone off, Miss," said Norry.

"Gone! I am lost! Ungrateful boy! If I wronged the father, did I not serve the son? Haste! call him back! he has my life in his hands."

"Quit the room, Norry!" exclaimed Katharine, stamping her foot against the boards with an expression of anger which was foreign to her nature. The servant obeyed, after a world of

wondering gestures, crossings, and muttered ejaculations.

The violence of the action served, in some degree, to recal Fitzmaurice to a perfect consciousness of his situation.

"What, Kate, my gentle Kate grown passionate?" he said, in wonder and tenderness, as he took her warm hand in his, and gazed still with some expression of listlessness into her eyes: "These veins have young and boiling blood within them, my little girl. You must learn to temper and subdue it in time, or it will lay the seeds of a bitter old age, and a fearful death for you."

"I will, sir—you are better, are you not, father?" said the daughter, regarding the speech as a part of the lingering delirium which had seized him, and affecting to coincide with it, in the light and cursory manner which one uses to satisfy the sufferer on all such occasions; and *than* which nothing can be more irritating, if the person towards whom it happens to be adopted should at all suspect its motive.

"You treat me like a child," said Fitzmaurice,

with sharpness, "no matter. It may be the time is not far distant, when it will be the act of a fool to mutter a word of reason in my ears," he continued, passing his hand over his brow, and turning his eyes wildly from her glance :—
 "Yes. Many that have eat and drank at my board, would only eat and drink the freer, when the master of the house was in Swift's Hospital. And the mistress of Kilavariga would smile as merrily too. She would be her own mistress then. Go, go! You are like the rest. Go from me, girl, go from me."

Shocked and wounded as she was by these expressions, the horrible indications by which they were accompanied, were more than sufficient to stifle all the selfish feelings of wronged and undervalued affection, which would at any other time have burned like a fever-stroke within the breast of the devoted girl. Persisting, notwithstanding his pettish repulses, in clinging around her father's neck, she sobbed and wept upon his shoulder, until she felt an assurance of relenting in the renewed pressure of the hand, which he still retained.

“ I did not, indeed, think of what I was saying, sir,” she exclaimed, in her most repentant tones, perceiving at once, that the surest way of redeeming her error, was by adopting the directly opposite course. “ But why will not my father confide in me? I am no longer a child, in whom one should fear to repose a trust, nor am I incapable of feeling and participating in the grief, the secret grief, whatever it is that is weighing down your heart. Do you not feel I love you, father? Have you not been my only friend from my very childhood? Has not all that I prize and reverence most, my knowledge of right and wrong, my perception of virtue, my religion; been all taught me by you, and you only? and how could I, if I were of the worst nature in the world, do otherwise than dearly love and honour you?”

Surprised, and not a little pleased with the energy and fervour with which the gentle girl made her appeal, the old man paused a moment, while he surveyed her with a moistened and affectionate eye. The very last phrase which she used, however, appeared to jar against his

thought, and interrupt the kindly feeling that had begun to diffuse itself over his breast. His brow contracted, and he mused for a moment.

"Aye, Kate," said he, "but will you continue to hold this sentiment? Suppose the time should come when none, but you, could, or would do other than revile and hate me, do you think you would continue to honour your old, and perhaps erring, but fond, fond parent?"

"It was the commandment of the Eternal God himself," exclaimed the maiden, in a burst of staid enthusiasm, "delivered amid the lightnings and thunders of the Holy Mountain, 'Honour thy Father and Mother!' and there was no reservation found upon the tablet of stone. Man may persecute, sickness may change, grief may depress, poverty may chill, or guilt may blacken the heart of the parent, but the bonds of the child are never loosened."

"Then should the world call me a guilty wretch, and prove me little less, I may still have a daughter?"

"When that day comes, father, I will say

my eyes and ears are false, and trust my heart alone, that will speak for you against them."

The old man reclined against the head of the bed for a few moments, while his eyes closed, and his lips moved in silence. Then without altering his position, he waved his hand gently, and said in a soft and broken tone: —

"Leave me, Kate, for a few minutes to myself. I will look for you in the parlour. Clear all signs of anxiety from your countenance, and prepare yourself for a mournful confidence."

Katharine obeyed in silence, and her father, after performing the duties of the toilet, began to deliberate within his own mind the events of the morning, and their most probable consequences.

It was a passing comfort to him to know, that he had at last found one to whom he might show himself such as he really was, without meeting that quick repulsive horror and distrust, which he feared worse than conscience; and yet it was a bitter humiliation to be reduced to the necessity of lowering himself in the eyes of his own child, and directing those

feelings of terror and detestation at vice, which his own instructions had generated in her mind, against himself in person. For one moment, an involuntary wish escaped him, that he had reared his daughter, with a somewhat less acute susceptibility of the hideousness of crime, and a more qualified admiration of its opposite than now formed the groundwork of her character. It was but a glance of thought, however, in which neither his reason nor his feeling had any participation, and was forgotten even before it was condemned. He concluded by determining to make the confidence which he meditated, and after praying, for the first time in many a year, with a somewhat lightened spirit, he descended to the parlour, where Katharine was awaiting him.

The young lady had in the mean time been occupied with doubts and conjectures, of an equally agitating, though a less gloomy character. Notwithstanding the warmth of feeling, into which she had been hurried by the enthusiasm of her affection, during the preceding scene, she was very far from anticipating, even in thought, the possibility that her filial love

could be put to so extreme a test, as her words declared it capable of surviving, and she looked for nothing more in truth than her father had himself led her to expect—"a mournful confidence." Even the wild and haggard air which was about his features and actions, as he entered the room, were insufficient to lead her to suspect, that his promised secret could comprise any thing of a darker, or more fearful hue.

He motioned his daughter to keep her seat, and after glancing along the passage by which he approached, closed the door and slipped the little bolt into its place. Then, after pacing up and down the room several times, as if debating with himself the easiest mode of opening a conversation so replete with humiliation to one party, and horror to the other, as that which he was about to enter upon, he stopped opposite his daughter's chair, and fixing his eye, all lighted up as it was with a thousand fearful emotions, on her mild and tenderly anxious glance, he said :

"You know not perhaps, or have not considered the full extent of the consequence which

you draw upon yourself, by urging me to this confidence. You have not had time to think on the subject, how deeply and closely it will involve your peace of mind, nay, perhaps, your health of soul, how intimately and perfectly your fate must become intertwined with that of him, into whose secret heart you are now about to penetrate, unbidden."

"There must be safety, father," said the girl, a little startled and confounded by the strangeness of his manner, "there must be peace, wherever you lead me."

"Do nothing on presumption," was his reply, "I wish you to pause, and ponder well, before you have my secret, for when it is once told, I shall hold you bound to me, and to my service, more firmly than ever, though perhaps not equally to my love."

The last words were uttered in so mournful a tone, that the current of Katharine's feelings, which had been a little disturbed and qualified by the mysticism of the previous speech, again rushed into their old channel. Her eyes filled up as she grasped her parent's hand in hers, and wetting it with tears of filial love and reve-

rence she said, in hurried, and yet irresolute accents :—

“ O father, I do not know what you mean, or what I am to fear, but speak—speak, in God’s name; whatever it is that troubles you ought not to be spared to me. If it be a sorrowful tale, I may make its memory sit lighter on your heart, and two, at least, can bear the burthen better than one. If it be guilt that—Guilt,” (she shuddered and was silent one instant, as she detected a word on her lips, which her will had not directed them to utter)—“ forgive me, sir, that cannot be, I know—No, father, no,” in increasing agony, as she read not the indignant denial she looked so eagerly for in his cold and marbly eye—“ you have taught me to love virtue, to adore a God, to fear his anger, to deserve his mercy, father! speak! speak to me—.”

“ Peace, girl!” said the old man sadly, yet sternly, “ attribute not to the inactive instrument the music which was made by the divine breath that filled, and the hand that governed it. He who holds a light to another, is most like to fall himself. Sit still, and hear me.”

And replacing the trembling girl in the chair, which in her agitation she had left, he stood close at her side, and after a pause, began :

“ You have heard of the circumstances which attended the death of William’s father ? ”

“ Yes, yes, sir ! ” replied Kate, in a low and hurried tone, with a horrible failure and sinking at her heart.

“ When he died, there was but one friend at his side.” As he proceeded, the sallow and ashy countenance of the old man became deepened in hue by the rushing of the scanty currents of life into channels which they had long ceased to visit, and his eye became gradually fiercer and fiercer, as the fear and horror that oppressed his daughter became more manifest in her look and attitude. “ Sit erect, girl, and hear me steadily. You have forced me to say what, except in madness, I thought mortal ears should never hear me utter ; and you must abide the consequence. Sit still, then, and do not flinch or waver, while I speak to you, as you value your father’s reason.”

“ I will, sir. I am not terrified,” whispered the bewildered girl, while a strange mixture of

anxiety and listlessness became blended in the gaze which she now bent on the old man.

"The two friends," he continued, after a pause of fearful recollection, "were sitting together by the little brick hob in the hooker's cabin, and talking gaily enough about the work they had both been about. Friends leagued in crime are but light lovers, though their bonds are the stronger by the addition of fear and community of guilt, than those which simple liking ties. Few words were necessary to bring the frown and the taunt where the laugh and the jest were seen and heard a little while before. A sharp speech provoked a blow, and the friendship of a long life was dissolved as suddenly as life itself, when the deathstroke touches it. The man who received the indignity remained silent and gloomy during the remainder of the evening, although he did not refuse his hand when the aggressor sued for reconciliation. The disgrace was festering at his heart. Soon after, a dark and foggy night came on. Both these men ascended on deck to speak at greater freedom, and draw a somewhat purer air than that of the close and smoky cabin where

they had been lying just before. At a moment when the vessel heeled more deeply than usual before the blast, while the steersman was busy at the helm, and his mate with the foresheet—and while the two stood alone and unseen (though not unheard,) upon the forecastle—one roaring, laughing, and unsteady with drunkenness and with triumph; the other equally intoxicated, but after a darker and more sullen fashion, and from a different cause, the aggressor staggered a little, reeled, and overhung the lee-gunwale. The opportunity flashed like lightning upon the heart of his enemy; he darted on him; and in the fierce effort almost precipitated his own fate, and mingled it with that of his victim. The fluke of an anchor, however, caught in a part of his frieze great coat, and he hung suspended between both worlds, while the dying shrieks of his victim, the gurgling of the death struggle, the angry dash of the waters, and the whirring of the wild gale, sounded in his ears like the din of the last judgment. He was saved, however. The vessel swept on, and the voice of the dying man was speedily lost in the distance. A lie protected his destroyer."

The old man here paused, and sunk back in his chair, exhausted by the fierceness and horror of his recollected sensations; while his daughter sat stooping forward, her eyes fixed in motionless horror upon his, and every feature bent up, and set hard in an expression of devouring attention; her limbs and frame stiffening with the anguish of the dreadful suspense in which the old man's pause had left her:

“ — as if each other sense
Were bound in that of hearing, and each word
Struck through it with an agony.”

At length he resumed in a faint and hoarse tone, without daring to lift his eyes toward his auditor: “ the man who died on that night was Robert Aylmer; and his murderer was——”

Uttering a low, yet piercing scream of agony, the wretched girl cast herself at the feet of her guilty father, in an attitude of deprecation and entreaty.

“ No, no, you will not say it, sir. O, do not, in the name of the heaven you have taught me to venerate, plunge us both into such a gulf of horror. What, my father! my kind, good father, in whose bosom I have been fondled—

whose lips I have kissed—whose hand has blest me morning and evening for fifteen years :—my dear, dear father, do a deed so full of horror and crime—a murderer—a secret murderer!—Ha!” with a cry of exultation, as a momentary flush of burning pride and shame, the impulse of an uncalculating instinct, passed over the brow of the old man, at the branding epithet, —“ I see it there—I knew it could not be; you are not he of whom you spoke, father? Forgive, forgive me, sir, for so cruel, so insulting an anticipation of your words.”

“ It is too late for recanting them now,” said Fitzmaurice quietly, but with a dreadful ghastliness in his eye: “ the blood of my oldest friend is on my hands; I have told my sin, and my soul is lighter.”

“ Good heaven! blessed mother of God!” muttered Katharine, as she rose from her knees, and passed one hand in a trembling and hurried manner over her forehead, and about her loosened hair, while her eye became fixed in stupid terror on the earth. A silence of terrible reflection to both ensued. Fitzmaurice perceived, at a glance, that he had for ever lost the esteem

of his child. That was bitter. Katharine beheld, in one short hour, the peace, the happiness of her whole existence withered and parched up; her duty made burthensome as crime; her heart's warmest and oldest affections made grievous to her soul, its faith disproved, its idol broken down, and the shrine of its worship polluted and made desolate. This was more bitter still.

After a pause of some minutes, Fitzmaurice approached her and held out his hand. She shuddered, and shrunk back upon herself with an involuntary action, and half-stifled exclamation of repugnance. He attempted to smile, but his lip grew pale, and his brows were knit in anguish at the change.

"I thought this, Kate," he said, sadly; "but I do not blame you for it. And yet it is a sad promise to me of what I am to expect from a malignant and suspicious world, when my own daughter, whom I have reared and cared for, now sixteen years, shrinks from my touch as if i were that of a viper."

Perceiving that this appeal was ineffectual, and that the stroke had been too hardly dealt

on his daughter's heart, Fitzmaurice continued, rising, "and now, Kate, though I put your affection to a strong test before I spoke to you on this, you shall not find me ungenerous enough to profit by the hasty enthusiasm of the moment. I have lost your love. I grieve for it, but I do not blame you. Yet, without your love I will never allow your service nor companionship. Go you out at that door—I will take this; and let that be our final parting. Go, my loved, my injured child; forget your miserable father,—think of him as of one departed, but not in crime, for that would make his memory bitter to you; but as one who erred, and found the grace that heaven treasures for the penitent. Another land must be my refuge from the retribution which my guilt demands, and must afford me time to labour for that divine grace. Farewell, Kate; go, and be gay and happy, and innocent as ever, and leave your old parent to his guilt, his sorrow, and his solitude."

This speech had the effect on its hearer, which the speaker wished and intended. The sluices of her soft and feminine passions had been all dammed and choked up, almost to

suffocation, by the grand and overwhelming horror that had been thrown about her, and only wanted a single pressure on the master-spring, one whisper in the ear of the heart to set them flowing again, in all the impetuosity of interrupted feeling. She flung herself into her father's arms, and twined her own around his neck, while she leaned her head against his bosom in a hysterical passion of grief.

"No, no, father!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could give words to her affliction, "part we shall not, at least. Whatever you may have been to others, you have been always kind, and tender, and good to me, and my hand must not be the first to cast the stone at my only friend. The changes of the world can affect us but little, for we have always lived more to ourselves than to it; and a life of loneliness will be nothing more than a prolonging of past quiet. Yes, father, my resolution is taken. If you must leave home for ever, you take all my home with you; and, for my own heart's ease, I must follow it." It can hardly be said, (for thoughts will often come unbidden, and make obstinate battle with the will) that we charge the gentle

and affectionate Kate with any selfishness of feeling, in acknowledging that while she spoke the last sentence a new thought, a new fear, and a new pang darted into her heart, and seemed, for the moment, to have almost cleft it asunder. William Aylmer? She gasped for breath, while her aged parent folded her to his breast, and moistened her neck with the first tears he had shed in many days.

We will close the scene on this afflicted pair, and cast our eyes for a short while in another direction.

It will be recollected that Sandy Culhane had received directions from William Aylmer to hold in readiness for him on this morning the horse on which he was about to bear the intercepted letter to Hasset-Ville. The winter dawn had scarcely whitened in the east, when he was at his post in the old stable, preparing the animal for the appointment. He was busied after his usual fashion, rubbing down the pleased and sleek-coated beast with a "wisp" of straw, while he puffed away the clouds of dust that enveloped his person, and hummed out an occasional

bar of his favourite *madhercen rhu*,* interrupted by "hirrups! stand over, eroo! hiss—ss—ss—ss—the little 'omaneen you were—Aizy!" when a "God bless all here," from the darkening doorway, suspended his labours; he looked up and beheld an old man in a grey frieze dress leaning against the jamb, and throwing his head on one side, to screen it from the snow that drifted across. It was the herdsman of Kila-variga.

"Yeh, then, isn't it airly you're goen roven this mornen, Mick? What's the murder now?"

"Whist! whist, Sandy, I have something to say to you.—Will she kick?"

"O, sorrow a taste! Aizy, you born jade, and let the nayburs come in," as he observed the animal throw back its ears, and use a menacing gesture towards the intruder. The latter shook down an armful of the sweet hay in a corner of the stable, and seating himself on it in a fair and easy Irish way, commenced business at once.

"Have you air a thief in your house, Sandy, that wears brogues an pavers?"

* Little red fox.

Sandy stared as he replied; "a thief, Mick, eroo? Bad 'cess to the thief at all in our house, wit or without the pavers."

The herdsman paused, and seemed to take thought for a moment, then glancing at Sandy's well-greased dogskin shoes, he beckoned him to follow to a little distance where a long track of footsteps intersected the plain white surface of the snow-covered lawn.

"Would you look here, Sandy?" said he. "The master's turf-rick, the slane turf, was broken last night, and I traced those steps over the little haggard wall, and through the paddock, and by the forge, and here, all the ways, to Bally-Aylmer. 'Tis hard to tell the marks o' these steps now, for it was snowen since they wor made, but here's one of 'em close be the wall, put the print o' your crubeen a-nigh that av you plase."

Sandy indignantly stamped his foot in the snow, and the investigator, after viewing both impressions, shook his head, as if disappointed.

"They are quite defferent. There's pavers here wit heads as big as tin-pinnies, and yours

hasn't only toe-tacks in 'em, like the gintlemin."

"Why then, you lahu-muthawn* o' the airth!" exclaimed the insulted Sandy, now that the cause of the herdsman's action was so unmincingly announced. "Is it maning that it was meself was at your ould turf-reek you wor?"

"Aisy, aisy, now, Sandy!" said the other moving on before him towards the stable; with one arm resting on his back, under his long coat skirts, and motioning him back with the other, "There's no offince. I seen the print of a handsome, clever foot in the snow, and where was I to look for it, av it wasn't with Sandy Culhane? But sure I ought to know better, for you shamed it out intirely whin you put your own a-near it. Sure av I wasn't blind, I ought to know, that it isn't sech a *plob* of a fut as that abroad, that could bother Norry Kil-martin's dreams."

With a heroic effort of forbearance, Sandy mastered his indignation, and complacently glancing down at a hideously formed foot, followed the herdsman into the stable, where he recommenced his labours on the ecclesiastical

* Half-natural.

sides of the well-conditioned quadruped, while the former resumed his seat and meditative air on his heap of fresh hay.

"It's droll still who the brogues belonged to," he continued, after a pause, "but all is one; for if I was to bring him in bound hand an fut to the master, he'd be the first to let him off himself. What do you think did he do the other day, only relase the Barret's pzaties from the cant, and bid him say nothen about the trifle o' the rent that was due, but to set to work agen, fresh on a clear gale?"

"Wisha, the Bartets are poor cratur's!" was all Sandy's reply.

"More's the pity to be losing to 'em, since it does 'em so little good."

"Did you ever hear the ould fable of Jack Finnane, and the white-eyes?" said Sandy.

"To be sure I didn't, for what should I?"

"Sit aisy then, and I'll tell you it. This Mr. John Finnane, you see, was a kind of a half-sir, a middleman that used to be great long ago, letting out land in acres and half-acres, and quarter-acres to the poor people, that would

maybe want a *gwal** of the pzaties coming on the idle season; and a hard and a bitter landlord he was to the poor fellows, that wouldn't have the rent agen the gale day, and good care he took, I'll be bound, that not a single con-nopp †, ever left the airth ant'l every camack ‡ was paid, dead gale and all. Signs on, it often chanced, as most like it was, that the poor tenants, not having the defference o' the rint, used to go into the pzatie fields at night, pulling up the stalks and filling their little Jack Daws § with what God sent up with the roots, which being made known to John Finnane you see, he sat up of a night to know would he catch any of the plunderers at their doings, which they having notice of, didn't come, as why should they? being marked for the quarter sessions, surely.

" Well! 'twas coming on midnight, and Mr. Finnane being as it were tired with himself, sat down on a ridge of the pzaties, with his feet in the furrow, and he very sleepy, it being Jerry

* Armful.

† Potatoes.

‡ Penny token.

§ John Doe, a small bag.

Graham's quarter. 'Tis aisily known he opened his eyes wide enough, whin he heard what do you think, only Jerry's white-eyes talking to one another in the ground under him! He stooped his head down, and began to hearken. 'Will you grow any more?' says a little pzatie to a big one.—'No, *a gra gal*,' says the big pzatie, 'it's big enough I am already.'—'Well, then,' says the other, 'move out o' the way with you a piece, and let us grow for Jerry Graham and the craturs.'—'I'd be happy to oblige you then,' says the big pzatie, 'but sure it's well you know none of us can stir from our places an inch *ontil John Finnane gets his rint*. 'Murther alive!' says John, crossing himself and thumping his breast above, 'are the pza-ties themselves cryen out agen me? Murder, but that's great intirely.' Home he went, wondering, and people say Jerry Graham was bid to dig his quarter and welcome next mornen."

"E'then, thanky for your parable, Sandy," said the herdsman, "but maybe we'd find one on the other side, for an open hand isn't always the luckiest after all."

Sandy suffered his arm to rest on the shoulder of the animal he was tending, and placed himself in an attitude of attention, while the other, throwing himself back in an easy reclining posture, commenced his "fable."

"Mr. David Foy had a great heart, but, like the master, there was too much of it, for there was no bounds at all to his doings, when he took it into his head to spend his money; an having no famaly nor air a wife that would look after the house and things, every whole tote went wrong intirely. Besides, he was great after the hounds; and a fine rider he was, and with sech a dawny darland of a horse, that he one day left hounds, hunt, hare, an all behind him. On he went, an he was goen, goen, goen (as the ould gossips say), ont'l he came to a great valley, intirely. And there he saw THEMSELVES, in their little red jackets, and with caps on their heads, and hurlies in their hands, and they playen goal. Well, an ould hag that was sitten as it might be this way like meself, see David and made to-wards him with a piggin of something that's good, which he refused, and well became him, knowen it was not good to

take drink from the like.' 'Take it, heart,' says the old hag, 'and don't spare. It's David Foy's cider, and long may he live and reign; we don't want for the best he has, for it's we that get all that's wasted in the house by bad looken after, and it's good liven we have here, while the poor christians are starving at his door. Take the drop and be comfortable.' 'Thanky kindly, ma'am,' says David, 'but I rather not, av you plase, wit the same thanks to you as if I did, my stomach is not well indeed this mornen, saving your favour.' 'No offince in life, sir,' says she. So they sat down together. By an by, in comes a strappen young Clooricaun with a pailful o' sweet milk. 'Where did you get that, eroo?' says the hag. 'E'then long life to Davy Foy, where should I get it only out of his dairy? He was out hunten, an Bridget was in the haggart wit Tim Foulloo, so I came in for my share wit the cat an the dog.' '*Shaguthine!* is this the way of it,' says Davy to himself. Then comes in another of the gentry with a firkin o' butter, and another wit a gammon o' bacon, and all in the same story, and Davy himself by all the time, and not one o'

them knowen him, in rigard of his never being about the house, hardly. ' 'Tis little admiration for ye to be so fat, gintlemin,' says he at last, as he was wishen 'em a good mornen, at which they all laughed hearty, and nodded and winked their little wicked eyes at him, mighty merry intirely, as much as to say, ' True for you, lad.' In a year after he came to the same place: the little goal-players were nothen but skin and bone, and the old hag was scrapen a raw pzatie agen a grater to make a cake for their supper. ' Oh, then the Cromaylian curse upon your head, David Foy, for we know you now!' says the whole set of 'em together—' there's all we got losing after you this twelvemonth,' shoven the raw pzatie the same time. ' The more my luck,' says David, ' wasn't it ye'r own taiching?'"

Having, as he believed, fully discomfited Sandy at his own weapons, old Michael rose to depart, with the view of instituting an inquiry at the neighbouring village relative to the owner of the mysterious brogues and pavers.

He was scarcely out of sight, when the back door of the dwelling-house opened, and the

stranger who had on the preceding evening accosted Sandy in the avenue of Kilavariga, made his appearance. The latter was busily occupied in polishing a stubborn fetlock when the old man hurried into the stable.

"Come, Sandy, saddle the horse, and lead him out here," he exclaimed. "I have received a piece of intelligence from Mr. Evans which will render it necessary for me to travel fifty miles before night-fall. Is the animal frost shod?"

"Quite complete, ye'r honour. But that's a thing o' nothen. Mr. William Aylmer that bid me have the cratur convanient for himself this morning."

"Where is he going?"

"Sarrow a know do I know."

"No matter. Give me the horse, and make out what excuse you can for your young master."

"The best I can offer then," said Sandy, as he assisted the stranger to mount, "will be to keep out of his way intirely, for indeed he's not over honest * when he do be crossed."

* *Honest* is a synonym for *mild*, or *gentle*, in Ireland.

"Kind father for him," said the stranger, laughing.

"Worst in his day, sir," replied Sandy, "but time and trouble changes the people."

The expression of merriment was instantly quelled on the lip of the stranger. He fetched his breath hard, and, checking the bridle, rode through the yard gate just as Aylmer, wrapped in his great coat, and covered with snow-flakes, made his appearance on the avenue. The latter used a slight action of surprise, as the other passed him at a more rapid pace than he had before employed.

"He knows the horse!" said Sandy, "time for me to be moven." And he was about to depart, when the young gentleman's voice arrested his flight.

"Who is that man, Sandy?"

"That man, sir? is it?....It's....Mick Donovan, sir, Mr. Fitzmaurice's herdsman."

"He looks more large, and rides better than he used."

"Thriving with him the place is, your honour. —Not a word about the horse!" he added, in

some astonishment, as Aylmer, with a look of some disappointment, turned off in the direction of the house. "Some trouble at Kilavariga, I'll be bail."

The limits which we prescribed to ourselves at the commencement of this little tale, render it impossible for us to enter into a minute detail of many unimportant circumstances which occupied the principal personages during the several days which followed the eventful morning of Aylmer's discovery. It will save the reader a great deal of heavy reading, and the historian of the parties a great deal of analyzing matter, of speculations on impulse and motive, and cloudy talking, if we proceed to the next situation of the story with as little preface as possible.

Fitzmaurice and his daughter having heard nothing more of Aylmer, concluded that his resolution was fixed, not to enter the house of his old benefactor from that time forward. Although the cause of this determination, and the apparent probability of her young friend's per-

severing in it, had produced a mournful change both in the heart and in the appearance of the lively Katharine, she had exerted a sufficient degree of mastery over her wounded feelings to conceal at least the voluntary expression of her suffering from the eye of her parent. Convinced, as she now was, of the depth and intensity of her love for the haughty fugitive, and satisfied, even to the very limit of utter hopelessness, that no chance or change of circumstances could ever again restore the hearts of both to the relative position which they had occupied from childhood—satisfied, in a word, that loving as she did even to sickness of soul and frame, she yet loved in vain, it was touching to witness the quiet fortitude with which she disguised those feelings, when in the presence of her parent. Frequently, indeed, in her wanderings about the lonely mansion, when a scattered remembrancer of “past, happy hours,” caught her eye; when she looked from her window, in the calm and silent even-fall, on the scenes of their youthful sports; or when her hand, unconsciously straying over her neglected harp, happened to awaken a cadence of one of his favou-

rite melodies, in those moments it was that her bosom would swell and tighten, while the sudden passion laboured in her throat, and relieved itself at length in bursts of overwhelming grief. But the moment her father's footstep sounded on the flagged hall without, these signs of anxiety disappeared, and the note of the harp was changed to one of a lesser interest and meaning.

The change which had taken place in the disposition and manner of the old man, was still more striking, and more rapid. It seemed as if, instead of experiencing any relief from the confidence he had made, it only added fresh terrors to those which he had so long confined in his own bosom, and multiplied the chances and fears of detection that had made the last years of his life one long and weary chain of anxiety and sorrow. His eye had lost its heaviness and gloom, while it assumed instead a restlessness of glance, and a wildness and distrust in its most ordinary expression, which furnished his now more than ever vigilant and affectionate daughter with a more startling subject for alarm, than even the increased paleness.

of his lip and brow, and the rapid wasting of his sallow cheeks afforded. The sound of a strange footstep, the shutting of a door, the whistling of a sudden gust around the dreary mansion, any unexpected sight or sound, seemed to shake his being to the very centre. At these times, too, he was wont to receive the accustomed consolations of his daughter, with expressions full of a sharp and pettish asperity which, continued, repeated, and unatoned for, as they were, by any after-kindnesses, put the devotion of her filial love to a severer test than even the revolting cause in which they originated. With the fineness of perception which is so peculiarly the characteristic of her sex, she quickly arrived at the mode of treatment best adapted for the novel turn which the disease had taken. Like the minstrel of the Israelitish monarch, when the evil influence came over the mind of her patient, she abandoned all efforts to combat it by argument, or even condolence, and affected an air of perfect abstraction and security, while she ran, as if in careless practice, over the chords of her instrument, varying and accommodating the character of the melody to the changes

which were visible in the countenance of the listener, with a tact and fidelity which would not have been unworthy even of the mighty name which we have before mentioned. Yet all this was far from being remedial, and it was even palliative in a very inconsiderable degree.

They had been sitting together for some time, on the morning of the eighth day from that of Aylmer's departure, without interchanging a single sentence beyond the customary domestic greeting. The old man sat near the fire, his head drooped upon his bosom, and his eyes fixed with a melancholy expression on the clear light blaze of the turfen fire before him, while Katharine, accompanying herself on her harp, murmured over, *sotto voce*, the words of a popular "keen-the-caun," the lament of a mother over the grave of a beloved son. We give the stanzas :—

I.

The Christmas light* is burning bright
In many a village pane ;
And many a cottage rings to-night
With many a merry strain.

* The Christmas candle—a light, blest by the priest, and lighted at sunset on Christmas-eve, in Irish houses. It is a kind of impiety to snuff, touch, or use it for any profane purpose after.

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Young boys and girls run laughing by,
Their hearts and eyes elate—
I can but think on mine, and sigh,
For I am desolate.

II.

There's none to watch in our old cot,
Beside the holy light;
No tongue to bless the silent spot
Against the parting night.*
I've closed the door—and hither come
To mourn my lonely fate;
I cannot bear my own old home,
It is so desolate!

III.

I saw my father's eyes grow dim,
And clasped my mother's knee;
I saw my mother follow him,
—My husband wept with me.
My husband did not long remain,
—His child was left me yet;
But now my heart's last love is slain,
And I am desolate!

The song was not concluded when both the
melodist and listener were startled by a quick

* It is the custom, in Irish Catholic families, to sit up till midnight on Christmas-eve, in order to join in devotion at that hour. Few ceremonies of the religion have a more splendid and imposing effect than the morning mass, which, in cities, is celebrated soon after the hour alluded to, and long before day-break.

and vehement knocking at the chamber-door. The latter was the first to start from his chair, in a passion of terror. Before he could recover the command of speech or action, the voice of the little chambermaid was heard without, imploring instant admission, in accents which shewed that all the agitation was not confined to the interior. Katharine hastily slipped back the little bolt, and admitted the eager girl.

"What is the matter, Norry?" exclaimed her mistress.

"O ma'am, we're all zuin'd intirely. O master! O——" pausing, as her eye fell on the ghastly figure of the conscience-stricken Fitzmaurice, and fetching her breath for a moment, "Come, come this way, Miss Kate, I want to speak a piece wit you," beckoning the young lady after her.

"Stay!" cried the old man, hoarsely, "what have you seen? Speak, quickly!"

"Oh, murder, sir!" Norry cried aloud, wringing her hands in agony, "the army, the army,* intirely!"

"Coming hither?" inquired Kate.

* Any number of soldiers is so called by the Irish peasantry.

"Two red coats, wit ould Hasset along wit 'em, miss. Upon the aveny already."

The intelligence seemed almost to have paralyzed both the mind and frame of Fitzmaurice. He did nothing, proposed nothing, and was even listless, helpless, and passive, while plan after plan, both of escape and concealment, was suggested and rejected in rapid succession by the agonized daughter and her faithful and anxious attendant. "The back window," "the loft," "the turf-rick," "between the bed-ticks," "the chimney," were all cast aside as stale and hopeless, when, her eyes suddenly flashing with a gleam of intelligence, Norry slapped the palms of her tough hands together, so as to produce a report that echoed through the house like a pistol-shot, and startled the old man himself from his lethargy of fear.

"The ould makings of a cupboard," she exclaimed, pointing to the pier-glass, "the same place fare I hid the little dog the day the tax-man was here, whin he began barken in the wall within."

The proposal was caught up and acted upon instantly. The large glass was removed, and a

square niche in the solid wall, originally intended for a cupboard, was disclosed. Into this recess was the terrified old man hurried by the two girls, himself too perfectly overwhelmed with apprehension to offer either opposition or assistance to their movements. The mirror was then carefully replaced, and Katharine, after crossing her hands on her bosom for one moment, in a strong effort to master her struggling anxieties, and murmuring a brief and anxious petition to the throne of mercy, prepared to act her part in the coming emergency with the necessary firmness and composure.

"If he doesn't behave quieter than little Minos, there's little chance for him," said Norry, as she left the room.

The recollection of this circumstance was a new subject of alarm for the sensitive daughter. The story of Miss Fitzmaurice's dog, concealed from a tax-gatherer in a recess behind the pier-glass, and betrayed by his own barking, at the very instant when the old steward was leaving a blank for the article "dogs" in the inventory, had been so generally circulated, and excited so much amusement throughout the country,

that there was little hope of its having escaped the ears of Mr. Hasset. For this, however, she had to trust to fortune, as it was now too late to alter the position of the old man.

In a few minutes the magistrate made his appearance. He had had the delicacy, or the wariness, to forbid the approach of his armed attendants, and if it were not for the previous intimation of their approach, the young hostess would have had no reason to judge this other than a visit of mere ceremony. Katharine found herself, for the first time in her life, compelled to violate the truth, in the answers which she returned to this unwelcome guest. She did it, however, with tenderness.

Was her father at home ?

He had ridden out (very frequently, understood).

Whither ?

She had not asked him.

Did she soon expect him ?

She believed his *return* was quite uncertain.

The magistrate was silent for a few seconds ; then, seeming to have formed a sudden resolution, he said,

"Miss Fitzmaurice will pardon me, but I have a very disagreeable duty to perform. The presence of her father is absolutely required—and that duty shall not be discharged until every possible means has been resorted to in order to secure it."

"The doors are open, sir," said Katharine, rising, with an assumed haughtiness in her carriage, while her heart bounded with terror, "you are at liberty to use your authority as you please."

The young lady left the room, and the soldiers were admitted. She remained in the next apartment, listening in an agony of the cruellest suspense to the movements of the searchers within. They prolonged their scrutiny in a manner that showed how little reliance their director placed on the equivocations of the fair hostess. At times, a thrill of fierce terror shot to the very centre of her heart, and suspended its pulsation, when the footsteps of any of the party approached the hiding-place of the criminal.

"To the next room!" said the voice of the

magistrate, "don't mind the mouse-holes." Katharine felt relief.

"Easy, sir," exclaimed a fourth man, who had just entered, and in whose sharp, angular, cunning tones, the trembling Kate recognized the voice of Hasset's clerk, a gentleman who, to establish his qualifications for the situation he held, would very gladly have hanged half the parish, if necessary, "you have not done all the bizniz clean yet."

Kate grasped the back of a chair, and drew her light handkerchief tightly around her neck, while her whole frame shivered with a chilling anxiety.

"Well for ye," she heard the new comer continue, in a jeering way, "to have a lad that knows what he's about to guide ye. Did none o' ye hear the little matter about the dog and the tax-gatherer? Poh!"

"I remember something of it, I confess, Linehan," said Hasset, startled.

"Try it then, now."

Almost delirious with fear and disappointment, the miserable daughter fetched a quick

and hoarse breath, and bit her lip until the blood forsook it, to prevent her screaming aloud. Her limbs shook convulsively, and her eyes wandered with the wildness of despair around the chamber, while she waited the next movement of the inquirers.

"What are you about there?" exclaimed the informer. "Is it going to pick yourself out o' the glass you are for a prisoner? Behind the picktur is the place, you fool!"

"Never fear, Miss!" whispered Norry, who had just before slipped into the apartment, "that'll bother 'em. They'll find nothen there, barring pusheen and her kittens, for she has a way of her own up into it."

A suppressed burst of laughter among the men confirmed the truth of this anticipation; and the hissings, spittings, and growlings of the indignant occupier of the recess, as she placed herself in front of her squeaking brood, seemed to increase their merriment. The magistrate, however, quickly restored order.

"Hush! hush! come along, lads: Linehan, the place is there sure enough, and your hint

was a good one; but Richard Hasset's name to a warrant for such a prisoner as this, would scarcely look well in the county kalendar."

The discomfited wit made no reply, and the party left the room. As soon as she heard the door close after them, the daughter sunk exhausted into the chair beside which she had been standing, and gave vent to her excited feelings in bursts of mingled tears and laughter, while her hands clasped and raised, all trembling as they were, to heaven, gave all the evidence she could then furnish of her deep and burning gratitude.

Both mistress and attendant then returned to the parlour, where they were soon after rejoined by Mr. Hasset and his downcast secretary, the soldiers this time remaining without. It is needless to say their search had been unsuccessful. After apologizing for the uneasiness which he had given her in the performance of an unavoidable duty, &c., the former gentleman took his leave, and was followed by the clerk.

"I wonder what is it that thief o' the world, Linehan, is whisperen in ould Hasset's ear,"

said Norry, as she watched the party pacing slowly down the lawn.

"Are they returning hither?"

"They wor thinken of it I'm thinken, but to change their mind they did."

After having watched them fairly out of sight, the victorious pair proceeded to release their captive. He had sufficiently recovered from the stunning effects of the first announcement of his danger, to be now fully aware of its extent; and he descended from his lurking-place, the most perfect picture of guilt and horror that a stricken conscience ever made. Norry was extending one arm to support him, and with the other whisking the dust and mortar from his coat, when a deep and rapid inspiration of the young lady near her startled them both. The principle of life had been strained to so extreme a degree of excitement by the varying emotions of the last hour, that it was proportionably depressed on the restoration of security. The sight of her father, safely protected through the imminent perils which had during that time surrounded him, effected more than the immediate presence of those dangers themselves. In the

effort which she made to cast herself into her father's arms, her powers suddenly failed her and she sunk at his feet in an access of syncope.

The old man raised her from the ground, and supported her across his breast, while tears of grateful affection fell down in rapid showers upon her neck and bosom. The attendant, while she supplied the necessary means for the revival of her mistress, did not refuse her sympathy to the sufferings of the aged parent.

At that moment the door opened, and Mr. Secretary Linehan re-entered.

"I beg pardon, but I dropped a *handkitcher* somewhere, — O, murder! what's this, intirely?" as his eye fell on the group.

All were too completely absorbed in another matter to observe the intruder. Taking a speedy advantage of this circumstance, the honest limb of justice approached the window, and beckoned to some persons without. In a few minutes afterward, and while he yet stood concealed in the dark corner into which he had slunk, the whole party were present at his side. Norry, hearing the clatter of footsteps, looked over her

shoulder, shrieked, started to her feet, and dropping the stiff and clenched hand of her young lady, began clapping her own, and repeating her doleful cries in all the phrenzy of Irish despair. The father turned his wildered eyes on the strangers, and resigning his daughter to the arms of her attendant—

“ My child does not hear me,” he said in a faint and mournful accent, “ but give her my blessing when she wakes, and bid her pray for me. God bless you all ! One moment, sir” As he spoke, he pressed his lips to the cold and marble brow of his still unconscious daughter ; and untying the light silk handkerchief from her neck, he placed it listlessly in his bosom. Then putting himself in the custody of the magistrate, he was conducted in silence to the carriage which awaited him at the avenue gate.

Another actor was now added to the scene. William Aylmer had joined the party at their return ; but unwilling, for many reasons, to encounter the unhappy object of their pursuit, he had remained without until after their departure, and now entered the room just as Katharine began to revive.

"He is well—be comforted, Katharine," were all the answers which he returned to her first inquiries for her parent. She was not, however, so easily to be satisfied. She repeated her inquiries with an energy and determination of manner which made disguise hopeless.

"And what do *you* here?" she exclaimed, in a delirium of passion, so soon as she had collected from Norry's "O-hone's!" and Aylmer's silence, the truth of the event; "you were not with them when they first arrived—he was surprised—and you are his betrayer."

"You do me foul wrong. I endeavoured, perhaps against my conscience, to dissuade the officers of justice from entering here."

"Against your conscience!" she smiled with a ghastly bitterness on him, as she answered. "The conscience of an ingrate who could turn against the life of an adopted father; a man whose bread he ate, whose fire warmed him, whose roof protected him, and whose heart loved him for seventeen years. Justice! The justice of a law that would spill the cold blood of age, to make a peace-offering for the forgotten errors of youth; the law that continues

to persecute after God has forgiven! Go, go, sir; you have less heart than I thought. Go, satisfy your conscience, and be just."

"If my words must not be credited," said Aylmer, "I have only to endure, and to be silent."

"Answer one question. Have you not linked your name with those of his accusers? Are you not numbered on their list?"

Aylmer was silent.

"You have pledged yourself to take the old man's life! Aylmer, do not say so! think where you pass your childhood. Look around you, and upon those scenes where you first learned to enjoy life yourself. Will you make them desolate? Oh! believe me, Aylmer, it is seldom, very seldom that it is in the power of human judgment to decide between the right and the wrong in cases so doubtful as this. The law of man that cries for "blood" to the last, may yet be wrong; laws as fierce and cruel have been, and are no more in existence: and a more merciful race of men may alter this. The law of God that commands mercy and holy forgiveness *may* possibly be right. Let your own grateful

heart tell you to which of these chances you should incline."

"Katharine——"

"Or let this consideration guide you. Suppose yourself lying to-morrow on your death-bed, and gathering comfort to your soul from the memory of your past actions, would you feel happier, then, in the thought that you had forgiven a wrong, and saved your old friend, than if you had gratified your irresolute thirst for vengeance, or justice, now?"

"The Almighty that sees my heart, sees how clear it is from the tainting sin that you impute to it," exclaimed the youth; "but I have sworn to do what is just between the accused, his country, and his God. That oath I must not break."

"May that God, then, be my poor father's help, for his earthly friends have forsaken him! It is enough—Aylmer, farewell!" She placed her hand in his—"may he or she who acts ill in this, find mercy and pardon at the throne of grace. I leave you without anger; for you and I, whatever be the issue of this heavy trial, must never meet again!"

Before Aylmer could, by act or word, return any answer to her farewell, Katharine had glided out of the apartment. Wishing, nevertheless, to leave some message for her, which might possibly have the effect of vindicating him in some degree from the charge of wanton ingratitude, which she had urged against him, he turned towards Norry, who still remained, her back supported against the wall, clearing away, with the corner of her check apron, the tears that were pouring fast from her red and heavy eyes.

“Norry—” he was about to proceed—

“Oh! Go from me, sir!” cried the faithful attendant, with a fresh burst of grief; “go from me, you contrary gentleman—I rise out o’ you!”

And throwing her arms aloft, as if to give increased force to the expression, the indignant *soubrette* followed her mistress.

The next day’s noon beheld the father and daughter inclosed within the prison doors of an inconsiderable assize-town on the western coast.

The first month of a mild spring had passed

away, without inducing any material change in the condition of the persons of our history, and the little town above alluded to began to put on an appearance of life and bustle as the assize-week drew nigh. The generally silent and sunshiny streets were now made to echo the frequent tramp of the bespattered and reeking saddle-horse, and the lumbering rattle of the car which brought its load of corn (stacked until now, the season of scarcity), to the store of the small dealer, a sort of Lilliputian merchant, who made a new profit by shipping, or rather boating the grain to the next trading city. The fronts of the inns and *shebeens* were scowered up, and the rooms made ready for the temporary convenience of petty jurors, summoned from the furthestmost limits of the county; strong farmers anxiously looking for the success of their road presentments; Palatines seeking compensation for burnt hay-ricks and out-houses, fired by the hand of the ubiquitous White-boy; rural practitioners demanding the legal grant for the support of a dispensary; middlemen in the commission of the peace, eager to curry favour with the mighty so-

journalers by the number and the importance of their committals; grey coated rustics, who had come up to town to stand by a friend and relation, whose black-thorn perhaps had been a little too fatal among the neighbours at the last fair; country gentlemen willing to show off as lords of the scene, and ambitioning a niche on the grand jury list; and last and first and best, young and blooming speculators of another order, armed with as many terrors, bent up to as fatal a purpose, and with as fair, and as philosophical a principle for their motive, as that which governed the awful sword-bearers of the law itself.

The concourse of in-comers on this occasion was more numerous than usual, a circumstance readily accounted for by the singular case which was to be decided during the ensuing week. All intercourse with the prisoner was interdicted, and even his daughter, in order to retain the permission, which had in the first instance been granted her of attending to her father's wants in person, was obliged to restrict her own movements to the limits of the prison.

A calm, breathless morning beheld the small fishing-smack, in which Ayler had taken his

passage for the town, drop her peak in the small inlet which glided by the village of Blennerville, a kind of pigmy outport to the larger, or capital town. Nothing could be in more perfect accordance with the state of the voyager's mind, than the scene which was presented to his eyes, when the loud call of the boatman summoned him on deck. The air, as before mentioned, was perfectly still and breathless, and the clear sunless serenity of a spring forenoon rested on the landscape. On his left hand lay a flat champaign of a greyish marl, covered with numbers of sea-birds, who were busily angling in the little inequalities of the plain for the juniors of the scaly tribe, deserted by the tide in its retreat. Between him and the ocean, this marl or sand elevated itself into mounds of so considerable an altitude, as to leave only an occasional shimmering of the mighty sea without, visible between their obtunded summits. On the right hand the bleak and barren chain of mountains, which form the distance of the Killarney scenery, on the other side, rose suddenly in abrupt masses, to a height which left the southern prospect entirely to the

imagination, and threw an air of softened gloom and solitude around the handsome villas, which were scattered over the richly wooded and improved country at their base. The faint hum of the little town, in the distance inland, the twittering of the early swallow, the cry of the red shank, the occasional wild scream of the horse-gull, the whistle of the curlew, and the soft and plaintive cry of the green plover, all heard singly, and at long intervals, formed a fitting accompaniment to the scene, unless when the report of a shore-gun, directed by the murderous eye of some fustian-clad prowling duck-shooter on the coast, reverberated like a thunder-peal among the echoes of the mountain, and filled the air with a thousand whirring wings, and cries of terror and reproach. Above the little bridge of Blennerville, a group of boys stood knee-deep in the stream which flowed from the town, groping for "*flukes*," while their occasional exclamations of success or disappointment, sounded as distinctly in Aylmer's ear as if they had been uttered by his side. Toward the offing of the little inlet, the droop-

ing sails of the sloops and cutters, the sluggish heaving of the bulky ocean, and the jeering of the wits and master-spirits of the different crews, as they sat, lazily dangling their legs over the sides of their vessels, formed no unworthy balance to the inland portion of the picture.

"The two tin-pinnies, ye'r honour?" said the boatman, touching his hat, as Aylmer, with the privileged abstraction of melancholy, was turning off in the direction of the town, forgetful of his fare. Having rectified his error entirely to the satisfaction of the other party, he pursued his way to the town, which lay about a mile distant.

The flourishing of trumpets, and the trampling of many feet, announced to him as he entered the suburbs of the place, that the judges were already on their way to the court. As he hurried along the crowded street, obstructed in his career by persons as eagerly bent to accomplish the same end as himself, he fell in with a scene which presented as singular a contrast to that which he had just before been admiring, as his imagination could possibly have anticipated.

The rushing of the anxious multitude in various directions, the rattling of outside jaunting cars, empty turf-kishes, and grand jury-men's decayed and mud-covered carriages, the clattering of brogues and horse-hoofs, the shouting of one party at the release of a clansman from the clutches of the law, the shrieking and cursing of another group, who saw in the drooping head and manacled hands of an equally valued kinsman, the fearful announcement of a contrary judgment, the war-whoop of a drunken faction-leader, as he made an effort to caper in the air, and wheel his seasoned black-thorn above his head, the yelping of dogs, the squalling of children, the shrill remonstrance of shrewish mothers, the yet more hideous tones of a steam-engine ballad-singer, whose awful lungs, victorious over the frantic uproar about him, made most distinctly audible the burthen of a song on the woes of the then existing colonial war :

“ And they powering down their chain-balls for to sweep our
min away,

O wasn't that a could ricption in the North of Americay ?”

alternated now and then, in compliment to the

naval portion of his auditory, to the more popular doggrel of,

“ A sailor courted a farmer’s daatur,
Who lived convanient to the Isle of Man.”

These, superadded to the ordinary bustle of the town, formed a combination of sounds that would, had he been present, have qualified Old Morose for Hoxton; and would even have sounded strangely in the ears of an election assessor, a common councilman, an M. P., or a writer of overtures.

It was past noon when Aylmer, after bustling his way through the narrow purlieus of the place, found himself placed in the centre of a small, low-roofed, ill-lighted, dingy court, on one side the bench, from which at that moment the final sentence of the law was issuing; on the other, the dock, over the bar of which leaned two or three squalid looking, pale-faced creatures, listening with a stare of wildered abstraction to the announcement of their fate. The benches at either side were covered with counsel in blue frock-coats and coloured handkerchiefs, the usual forensic insignia being treated with philosophical indifference on a pro-

vincial circuit. In a small gallery at one end Aylmer witnessed an infraction of the inviolable rules of Irish female decorum, the presence of a woman among the audience of a court of justice. She seemed sensible herself of the singularity of her position, for her face and person were completely enveloped in a hood and cloak, and the place she occupied was the most unobtrusive that could have been selected.

"So the bills have been found against Cahil Fitzmaurice?" said a voice close at Aylmer's side.

"Aye, have they, then," was the reply, "and it's the next on the list. It's a droll * story: they say, counsellor —— has instructions to call up young Aylmer, in regard of a ghost appearing to him, and telling him the whole tote, by which token he drew the confession out of the old man next morning. It was a quare thing. They say young Aylmer thrun holy-water on the sperit, but it did not mind that no more than the divil would a parson, until he threatened it with the saycrament, when it flew up

* Extraordinary.

through the roof in a sheet of flame as big as a bonfire of a St. John's Eve."

A whisper now passed from the clerk of the crown to the judge, and was subsequently transmitted to the turnkey, who bowed and put himself in motion. The little grating at the far end of the dock was thrown open, and the rush which took place in the court, shewed that all present anticipated the meaning of the order. Heads were thrust out, and eyes strained from their sockets to catch the first glimpse of the aged prisoner.

The slow and uncertain footstep at length sounded on the boarded ascent leading from the prison, and the form of the accused emerging from the gloom of the outer dock, was in a short time presented to the gaze of the multitude. The old man bowed as he took his place, and passing his hand once or twice over his eyes to relieve them from the influence of the strong light which fell immediately around him, he remained passively awaiting his fate. Although he had been prepared to expect a considerable change in the appearance of his old guardian, Aylmer experienced a shock when

he first looked upon his face and person, which contributed very materially to shake his conviction of the fairness, or the justice of the course which he was himself pursuing. The pale and emaciated countenance of the prisoner, the thin, wrinkled cheeks, deeply indented temples, eyes, full of a morbid, sepulchral light, dry, staring hair, wasted fingers, and short hectic cough, seemed to intimate, that it was of little consequence to him, so far as his life was concerned, in what way the trial terminated. His intellect, too, appeared to have suffered from the ravages which disease had made on his frame and constitution. It was some moments before his attention could be sufficiently aroused to enable him to give utterance to the plea of "not guilty!" and attend to the opening statement of the king's counsel.

In Ireland, where, from a certain train of causes (the origin of which we leave to weightier judgments to determine), it has been found necessary to appeal more to the cowardice than the generosity of human nature; and where the even-handed goddess, Justice, has been too often accustomed to strike up her balance with

her sword—in this strange country, people are not surprised to hear what is meant to be the opening statement of the facts of a criminal case, made the vehicle of cruel, unreasoning, and inhuman invective against the accused. Whatever be the weight of evidence in reserve against him, be it so heavy and damning as to make any previous wordy accusation needless and brutal, or be it so light as to leave the wild and empty whirl of blackening assertions poured from the crown lawyer's lip unauthorized and libellous, still the malicious prosecutor has carried his point—he hears his victim, whether innocent or guilty, branded with all the diabolical epithets that a flowery vein of fancy, aided by a tolerable acquaintance with the poets, can suggest. The whole range of imaginative and real history is exhausted in search of monsters to serve for his parallel, and every sly and subtle art by which the personal feelings and prejudices of his judges can be enlisted against the unhappy culprit, is relentlessly put in execution. When we look at this fatal engine, which the law allows only to the accusing party, and consider that it is most frequently directed against

some poor wretch who is not even acquainted with the language in which he is thus traduced in his own hearing, and consequently cannot avail himself of his privilege (!!) of reply, we may, perhaps, perceive why it is that persons once placed in the dock make their exit more frequently through the back than the front entrance, why ropemakers thrive at a certain season, why the hangman can endow his daughter so handsomely, and why the science of anatomy is so attainable, and so practically understood in Ireland.

On this occasion, however, there was some degree of tenderness observed, and the detail of the case was straight-forward, simple, and impartial. After going through the greater portion of the evidence which he had in reserve, the counsel was observed to pause as he came to that part of his brief which contained the deposition of William Aylmer. It was a difficult subject, and one which, if he had had a less credulous audience to deal with, the learned gentleman might have hesitated yet more about introducing. The deep silence, however—the hush which his own pause occasioned among

his auditory, shewed him that they anticipated the tale (which was, indeed, already in circulation, with various embellishments similar to that overheard by Aylmer in the court), and that he would at least have to tell the story to grave and attentive ears. He was now coming, he said, to a portion of the evidence which would, perhaps, require a severer exercise of their judgments than any which had been hitherto submitted to their consideration. He believed, —he knew, that he was addressing himself to Christian hearers, to men convinced as he was himself of the divine origin of those sacred records which told of the last warning of the buried Samuel, the supernatural revealment of the murder of Uriah, and a thousand other interpositions of the Almighty Being, setting aside, or suspending, for some immediate end, the ordinary processes of nature. Justice, he remarked, was the same now as in those days —it was the same God who watched over the actions of all generations, and although the completion of the divine code, left perfect by the founder of the Christian religion, rendered those miraculous interventions less needful for

the interests of mankind than they were while revelation was yet partial and defective, still there was no ground on which a man could be justified in declaring such occurrences out of the pale of things possible. He admitted that nothing short of evidence amounting almost to ocular demonstration—a wonderful corroboration in circumstances—and, in short, all the most powerful incentives to belief which could be adduced—would be sufficient to persuade them to do so much violence to their common experience, but he trusted he should be enabled to bring all the corroborative testimony, which they could deem necessary, before them in the course of the evening.

With this preamble, the learned counsel proceeded to a detail of the deposition made by Aylmer; after which, the examination of witnesses commenced. The listless woman of the mountain, Vauria, was one of the first who were called; but her testimony went no further than to the quarrel of the friends, its termination, and a subsequent muttered threat on the part of the prisoner, as he followed the deceased up from the cabin. She admitted, too, on her

cross-examination, that she was instigated to come forward now, after a long interval of silence, by the desire of her kinsman, who had been imprisoned on the information of young Aylmer, for plundering the prisoner's sheep-walk.

Night had fallen before the case for the prosecution closed. Numbers of the spectators, exhausted by the length of the trial, had dropped off one after another, leaving the audience now comparatively thin and meagre. The voices of the counsel sounded more loudly, owing to the emptiness of the adjacent halls, and the silence of the streets, while the dull, heavy light cast by the few tallow candles which were placed in sconces against the walls and about the bench, added considerably to the comfortless solemnity of the scene.

At length young Aylmer was called on to give his evidence. A heavy moan from the prisoner, almost the first audible sound which had broken from his lips during the day, struck on the ear and on the heart of the youth, as he ascended the steps leading to the witness-table. It was too late, however, for pause or wavering.

He mustered his spirits, and bent up his soul to the duty which he had to discharge.

At the moment he took the book in his hand, and proceeded to repeat the form of the oath, a low, broken scream of anguish, long suppressed, and now in its effort to relieve itself, seeming to rend the heart from which it proceeded, rang through the building, and immediately after, a well-known, though strangely altered voice, from the now silent and nearly deserted gallery, exclaimed in a tone of piteous entreaty :—

“Aylmer! Aylmer! Oh, Aylmer! mercy! for the sake of old times, mercy! Do not swear away the old man’s life!”

The sensation which this singular appeal produced in the court may be easily imagined. The softness and tenderness of the tones brought tears into the eyes of many of the hearers, and it was even with some difficulty that the judge could compel his features into an expression of high indignation.

“Remove that person, Mr. Sheriff,” he said, quietly. “I know it, sir, and can make allow-

ance for it," he continued, in answer to a whisper from one of the prisoner's counsel, "but it is exceedingly indecorous. It should not have been permitted."

Order was again restored, and the witness, mastering, by a violent effort, the convulsions of passion by which his frame was shaken to the centre, proceeded to make his deposition. He went through all the circumstances of his testimony with a plainness and feeling which won irresistibly upon the sympathies of his audience, and impressed even the most incredulous with the conviction, that however deluded his senses might have been, the youth was saying only that which in his heart he believed to be true. The chief ground, however, upon which the counsel for the crown rested his claim on the credence of the jury, was the corroboration which the prisoner's conduct, on the next morning, afforded to the supernatural revelation of the night preceding. The impression left on the minds of those who sat in the box was striking and perceptible.

As Aylmer concluded his evidence, and pre-

pared to descend, a low whisper, addressed to the ear of the prisoner's leading counsel, caught his ear.

"MUST IT BE, SIR?"

"IT MUST. WE HAVE NO OTHER CHANCE, AND IT IS AS WELL FIRST AS LAST," was the reply, also conveyed in a whisper.

Aylmer, imagining that he recognized the voice of the querist, turned quickly round, but saw no face that he knew. The counsel was already engaged in earnest conversation with a learned brother.

The case for the prosecution having terminated with the evidence of William Aylmer, the gentleman who was engaged on the other side was about to rise and proceed with the defence, when he was interrupted by the court:—

"They had already," his lordship observed, "prolonged the hearing of the case far into the night, and many hours beyond the customary period of rising. He was far, however, from wishing either to cut short, or postpone the termination of the case, and he would suffer it to proceed until the whole of the testimony had

been laid before the jury, if the counsel on either side desired it. But it appeared to him that a more direct course might be used, in order to arrive at a satisfactory decision. The doubt which remained on his own mind, was so strong, as to induce him to hesitate a moment on the propriety of sending the case to the jury, such as it was at that moment. The evidence was of so peculiar a character, that it required an exertion of reason, almost "beyond the reaches" of that faculty in man, to form a conscientious judgment upon it. He admitted the force of the learned counsel's argument, in his statement of the case: he could not—no believer in Christianity could deny the possibility of such supernatural appearances; but there was one short mode of deciding the question, as to the reality of that which was here deposed to with so much apparent sincerity. The only ground on which the jury could reconcile to their own consciences the possibility of the tale, was the necessity of such an intervention, the *dignus vindice nodus*, for the ends of justice. Let, then (his lordship continued,

elevating his voice to a pitch of sonorous gravity), let the ghost of the murdered (*if* murdered) man come forward, and tell his tale here in this court, where his presence is much more necessary than in the chamber of a single individual.—Crier, repeat the form!”

A murmur of amazement ran through the court at this extraordinary speech, and immediately after a silence ensued, as breathless, anxious, and profound, as if the spectators really imagined they were about to witness a miracle. The crier twice went through the form, and twice the call died away unheeded among the echoes of the deserted halls. Aylmer, anxious to observe its effect on the prisoner, turned round to gaze upon him, when a startling change which took place in the whole appearance of the man, rivetted and fixed his eyes in the direction they had taken. Fitzmaurice was elevating his head from the stooping posture which he had maintained during the period of the last witness's examination, and casting a wild and wavering glance around him, when those, who, like Aylmer, had their eyes fixed on his, observed them to settle in a stare of frozen horror

upon a certain point. His lip grew white, quivered, and then was still as marble—his hair stirred and separated—his brow and cheek became yet more damp and death-like than before—a slight shivering passed over his frame, and then every member set and stiffened in a statue-like repose. There was no start—no sudden change of attitude; there was merely an interruption of the action of the frame, as if some fearful shock had penetrated at once to the principle of life, and left the will and the power of motion paralyzed and helpless; with a suddenness similar to that of a cataleptic attack, in which the patient seems to have

“ — forgot himself to stone,”

before any external change is visible. The eyes only, of the prisoner moved, following a certain object along the entrance of the court, and to the witness-table. Aylmer, terrified by the action of the criminal, looked in the same direction. An old white-haired man was in the act of ascending the steps. Aylmer felt as if a bolt of ice had been struck into his heart, when he recognised in the equivocal and lurid candle-

light, the features of his midnight visitor ; while the grey frieze-coat, and heavy sounding tread of the figure, brought to his recollection the strange letter-bearer of the Kerry mountains !

“ You see before you, my lord,” said the stranger, “ an unfortunate man, who had only within a few months returned to his native country, and has during that time been wandering like a thief about the precincts of his own estate, in fear of a legal visitation on a charge of many years’ standing. I am weary of a life of anxiety and concealment, and even if I were not called upon by the tongue of justice herself to come forward now, I would, before long, have gladly delivered myself up to the laws of my country.”

“ Your lordship will observe,” quickly remarked the counsel for the prisoner, “ that this gentleman, *Mr. Robert Ayler of Bally-Ayler*, does not make any confession or admission whatsoever, of the truth of the charge to which he alludes ; he merely comes forward to meet inquiry, and redeem his forfeited place in society.”

His lordship smiled as he nodded an acquies-

cence, and Mr. Ayler smiled too, but in a more melancholy sort.

"Gentlemen," said the Judge, addressing the jury, "I am glad to inform you that your business is over for this night. You will find a verdict of acquittal, and attend to-morrow."

"This beats the witch of Endor hollow," said the crown lawyer, as he threw his brief to the solicitor; "your lordship may take place among the cabalists of Domdaniel, after this."

Several other equally admirable witticisms passed among the junior counsel on the back benches; such as that his lordship was a clever resurrection-man—that he had given a *grave* turn to the proceedings—that it was a dead-letter affair—with various inflictions of a similar nature, which we grieve to say our slippery memory will not enable us to lay before the reader.

No person had yet sufficiently abstracted their attention from the now engrossing point of interest, the resuscitated lord of Bally-Ayler, to bestow a thought on the prisoner. It was with a general exclamation of surprise, therefore, that they now perceived, when the court com-

manded his immediate discharge, that his place at the bar was empty. The turnkey, all confusion at this unaccountable disappearance, seized a candle and examined the dock, when the unhappy man was found stretched on the floor, which was flooded with blood around his head. He was raised gently, and conveyed, while yet in a senseless state, to his bed-chamber in the adjoining prison; Sandy Culhane, by the direction of Mr. Aylmer, lending his assistance to the officers of the place.

The court immediately after became astir with the bustle of separation, and many a wondering hearer went home to astonish the ears of his fire-side circle with a red-hot narrative of the night's adventures, which have since been transmitted, with sundry decorations and gratuitous incidents superadded, to their children's children.

The two Aylmers, thus strangely restored to each other, proceeded together to a hotel, where the remainder of the night was spent in mutual inquiries and explanations, with an entire detail of which we shall not trouble the reader. The old man would, he said, have prevented all

necessity for an investigation before it commenced, had he been aware of the circumstances that had taken place; but a communication from the Flushing contrabandist, who had saved his life on the night of the quarrel with Fitzmaurice, and who was then sojourning at Waterford, had called him suddenly away, the morning after he had visited Aylmer at Kilariga. He had been induced to take this step by the information given him by Sandy Culhane, that a marriage was contemplated by Fitzmaurice between Aylmer and his daughter; a circumstance confirmed, in some degree, by the extraordinary care which he observed had been taken of the Aylmer property. This arrangement was not only displeasing to him in itself, but doubly so from its interference with a long and anxiously cherished design of his own, with respect to the fascinating and accomplished daughter of his foreign friend, Miss Quisana Van Huggel Schneiderdrugger.

"I perceive," Mr. Aylmer continued, as a slight flush passed over the brow and cheek of his son, at the allusion to Katharine Fitzmaurice, "I see that I was wrong in my calculation, and

so there is an end of the scheme at once. Totally ignorant as I was of my son's character and disposition, and rather induced to believe, from his intimate connexion with the family of Kilariga, that I should at least have wounded feelings and severed and bleeding affections to contend with, it is hardly surprising that I should have preferred making a confidant of the ancient and faithful servant of our house, immediately on my arrival. All occasion for secrecy is now, however, done away with, as my old friend Evans, of Evanstown, informs me that I have nothing further to apprehend from the possibility of evidence being yet found to establish the charge once in existence against me."

The old man was correct in his anticipations on this head. The next morning he placed himself voluntarily under arrest, and was presently after discharged in consequence of the non-appearance of the prosecutors.

The shock which Fitzmaurice had received was not so immediately fatal as might have been expected. He lived long enough to be re-established in peace and good neighbourhood with the friend of his youth ; and to join the hands

of his daughter and her lover in the holy clasp of authorised affection.

"Well, Mick," said Culhane, addressing the aged herdsman, as the wedding party passed near them in their return, "there's the thief with the brogues and pavers, that you traced from Kilavariga the night of the great snow. Which o' the three now do you think will dance the best *moñeen* at the hauling home?"

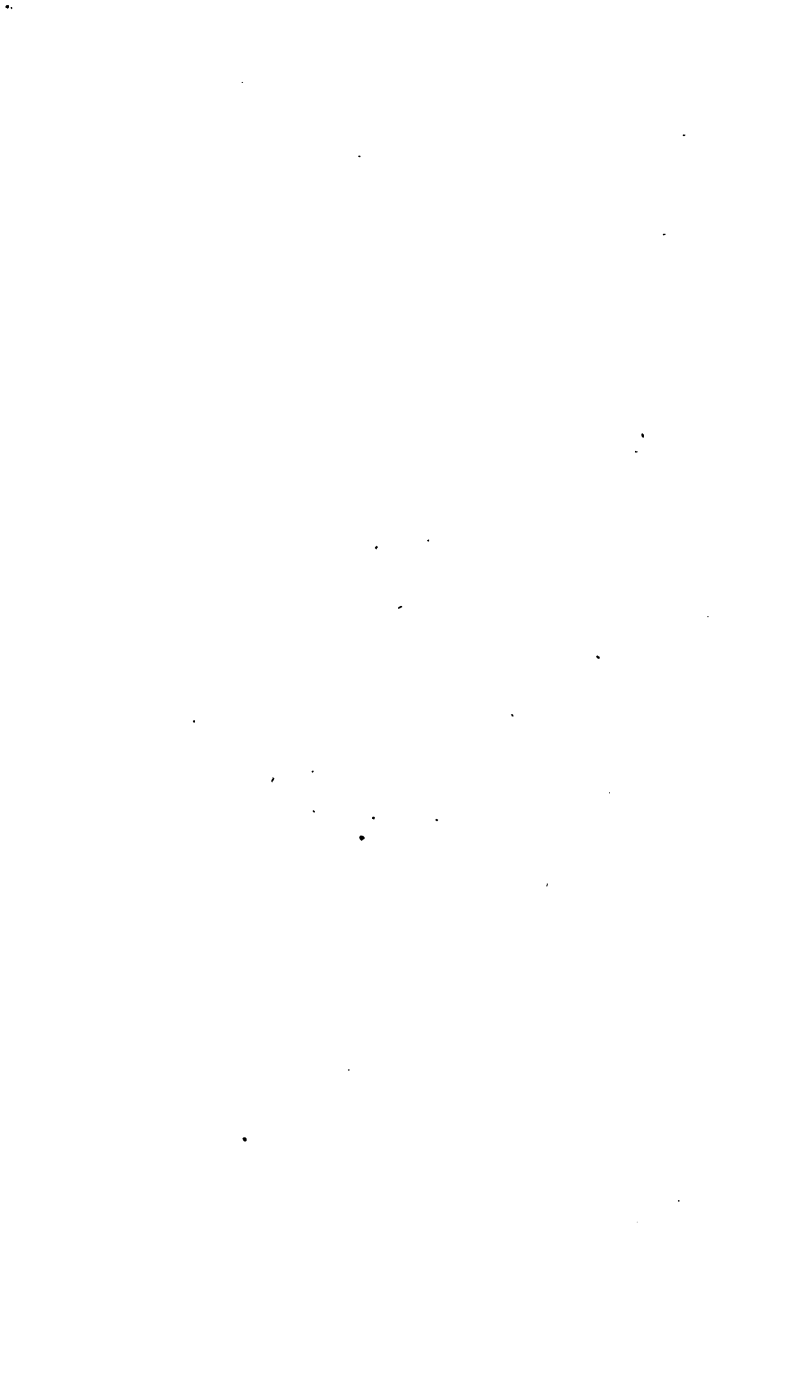
"The master thin, agen the world! Ah! the times for grinding and footing are gone by, but the Aylmers were always great hands at the feet, and av there's a relic of ould times in the country, it will be shown that night at Bally-Aylmer."

THE HAND AND WORD.

— Porque ninguno
De mi venganza tome
Vengarme de mi procuro
Buscando desde esa torre
En el ancho mar sepulchro,

CALDERON's *El mayor Monstruo los Zelos.*

Vengeance is here the right of none—
My punishment be mine alone !
In the broad waves that heave and boom
Beneath this tower I seek my tomb.



THE HAND AND WORD.

THE village of Kilkee, on the south-western coast of Ireland, has been for many years, to the city of Limerick, (on a small scale) that which Brighton is to London. At the time, however, when the events which form the subject of the following little history took place, it had not yet begun to take precedence of a watering place somewhat farther to the north, on the same coast, called Miltown Malbay, which had been for a long time, and still was a favourite summer resort with the fashionables of the county, such as they were. The village itself consists merely of six or eight streets, or straggling rows of houses, scattered irregularly enough over those waste banks of sand in which the land terminates as it approaches the Atlantic.

Those banks, or sandhills, as they are called,

do not, in this place, slope gradually to the marge of the sea, but form a kind of abrupt barrier or natural terrace around the little bay; descending with such a suddenness that the lodges on the extreme verge completely overhang the water, and with their snow-white fronts, and neat green lattices, produce a sufficiently picturesque effect when the tide is at the full.

The little inlet which has been dignified by the title of a bay, opens to the north-west by a narrow mouth, rendered yet narrower in appearance by the Duggara rocks, which stretch more than half-way across from the southern extremity. A bed of fine hard sand reaches as far as low-water mark, and when the retiring waves have left it visible, affords a pleasant promenade to the bathers. Winding on either side toward the opening of the bay, and along the line of coast, are seen a number of broken cliffs which, gradually rising to a considerable height, form to the north a precipitous headland called Corballagh; and to the southward they stretch away behind Duggara, in a thousand fantastic shapes. Close to the mouth or opening, on this side, is the Amphitheatre, which has been

so named in later years, from the resemblance which instantly suggests itself to the beholder. Here the rocks lift themselves above the level of the sea in regular grades, bearing a kind of rude similitude to the benches of such a theatre as that above-named, to the height of two or three hundred feet. In the bathing season this place is seldom without a few groups or straggling figures, being turned to account in a great many different ways, whether as a resting-place to the wanderers on the cliffs, or a point of rendezvous to the numerous pic-nic parties who come here to enjoy a dinner *al fresco*, and luxuriate on the grand and boundless ocean-prospect which lies beneath and beyond them.

A waggish host of the village with whom I had the honour to domiciliate during a brief sojourn on the place a few years since, informed me that a number of serious accidents had rendered the visitors to the amphitheatre somewhat more cautious of suffering themselves to become entangled among the perils of the shelving and disjointed crags of which it was composed. Among many anecdotes of warning he mentioned one which occurred to a meditative guest

of his own, for which I at first gave him credit for a poetical imagination, though I afterwards found he had spoken nothing more than a real fact:—

“To take out his book,” (he said in answer to a question from me, as to the manner of the occurrence), “and to sit down as it might be this way on a shelving rock, and the sea to be roaring, and he to be thinking of nothing, only what he was reading, when a swell riz and took him out a distins, as it might be to give him a good sea-view of the cliffs, and the place, and turning again the same way it came, laid him up on the same stone, where, I’ll be your bail, he was mighty scarce in less than no time.”

Beyond the Amphitheatre, the cliff rises to a still greater height, forming an eminence called the Look-out. Shocking as the tale may appear to modern readers, it has been asserted, and but too many evidences remain to give weight and colour to the supposition, that in those barbarous, (though not very distant) times, this place was employed as an observatory by the wild fishermen of the coast and neighbouring hamlets, the principal portion of

whose livelihood was derived from the plunder of the unfortunate men who happened to be wrecked on this inhospitable shore; and it is even recorded, and generally believed, that fires were, on tempestuous nights, frequently lighted here, and in other dangerous parts of the coast, in order to allure the labouring vessel, already hardly set by the war of winds and waves, to a more certain and immediate destruction on the rocks and shoals beneath, a practice, it is said, which was often successful to a fearful extent.

The most remarkable point of scenery about the place, and one with which we shall close our perhaps not unneedful sketch of the little district, is the Puffing-hole, a cavern near the base of the cliff last-mentioned, which vaults the enormous mass of crag to a considerable distance inland, where it has a narrow opening, appearing to the eyes of a stranger like a deep natural well. When the tremendous sea from abroad rolls into this cavern, the effect is precisely the same as if water were forced into an inverted funnel, its impetus of course increasing as it ascends through the narrow neck, until at length reaching the perpendicular opening,

or Puffing-hole, it jets frequently to an immense height into the air, and falls in rain on the mossy fields behind.

At a little distance from this singular phænomenon stood a rude cottage. It was tenanted by an aged woman of the place, the relict of one of the most daring plunderers of the coast, who was suspected to have been murdered by one of his own comrades a good many years before. The interior of the little building bore sufficient testimony to the unlawful habits of its former master. All, even the greater proportion of the domestic utensils, were formed of ship timbers: a rudder had been awkwardly hacked and hewed up into something bearing a resemblance to a table, which stood in the middle of the principal apartment, the rafters were made from the spars of boom, peak, and yard; a *settle-bed* at the further end had been constructed from the ruins of a gallant ship, and the little boarded parlour inside was furnished in part from the same materials. A number of planks, carelessly fastened together by way of a dresser, stood against the wall, shining forth in all the glory of burnished pewter, wooden-plat-

ter, and gaudily painted earthenware, the heir-looms of the house of Moran.

Terrified and shocked to the soul by the sudden fate of her late spouse, Mrs. Moran, the proprietress of the cottage, resolved that their boy, an only child, should not follow the dangerous courses of his father. In this she happened to be seconded by the youth's own disposition, which inclined to quietude and gentleness of character. He was, at his sixteenth year, far beyond his compeers of the village in point of education, and not behind in beauty of person, and dexterity at all the manual exercises of *goal*, single-stick, &c. &c., accomplishments, however, which were doomed not to be wasted in the obscurity of his native wilderness, for before he had completed his seventeenth year, he was laid by the heels, one morning as he sat at breakfast, and pressed to sea.

One day was allowed him to take leave of old friends, and prepare to bid a long adieu to his native home. This day was a painful one, for more reasons than one.

Of course it is not to be supposed that so smart, handsome, clever, and well-disposed a lad

as Charlie Moran, should be unappreciated among the maidens of the district in which he vegetated. He had in short a lover; a fine flaxen-haired girl, with whom he had been intimate from infancy up to youth, when the wars (into the service of which he suspected he was betrayed by the agency of the girl's parent, a comfortable *Palatine* in the neighbourhood) called him away from his boyish sports to the exercise of a premature manhood. Their parting was by no means more agreeable to little Ellen Sparling than to himself, seeing that they were more fondly and deeply attached to one another, than is frequently the case with persons of their age and rank in life, and moreover that it would not have been the easiest matter possible to find a pair so well matched in temper and habits, as well as in personal loveliness, (just then unfolding itself in each with a promise of perfect maturity) anywhere about the country-side.

The father of the girl, however, who, to say a truth, was indeed the contriver of Moran's impressment, looked forward to his absence with a great deal of joy. The old *Palatine*, who

possessed all the prudence of parents in every soil and season, and all the natural obstinacy of disposition, inherent in the national character of the land of his forefathers, had on this occasion his prejudices doubly strengthened, and rendered at last inveterate, by the differences of religion and education, as well as by that eternal, reciprocal, and indomitable hatred which invariably divides the usurping and favoured emigrant from the oppressed, indigenous, disinherited inheritor of the soil. Fond of his little girl, yet hating her friend, he took the part of wearing them asunder by long absence, a common mistake among more enlightened parents than Mr. Sparling.

On the day preceding that of young Moran's departure, when the weeping girl was hanging on his neck, and overwhelming him with conjurations to "prove true," an advice, to follow which he assured her over and over again in his own way, he needed no exhortations, her lover proposed to her to walk (as it might be for the last time) towards a spot which had been the usual limit of their rambles, and their general rendezvous whenever her father thought

proper to forbid their communing in his house, which was only done at intervals, his vigilance being a sort of chronic affection, sometimes rising to a height which seemed dangerous to their hopes, sometimes relapsing into a state of almost perfect indifference. To this spot the lovers now repaired.

It was a recess in the cliff that beetled over the caverns, and was so formed as to hold no more than three or four persons ; who, when they occupied the rude seats naturally formed in the rock, were invisible to any human eye which might be directed elsewhere than from the sea. The approach to it was by a narrow footway, in ascending or descending which, one seemed almost to hang in air, so far did the cliff-head project over the waters, and so scanty was the path of the descent on either side ; custom however had rendered it a secure footing to the inhabitants of the village, and the lovers speedily found themselves within the little nook, secluded from every mortal eye. It was a still autumn evening, there was no sunshine, but the fixed splendour of the sky above and around them, on which the lines, or rather waves of thin vapour extending

from the northwest, and tinged on one side by the red light of the sun, which had just gone down, presented the similitude of a sea frozen into a brilliant mass, in the act of undulation. Beyond them lay Bishop's Island, a little spot of land, shooting up from the waves in the form of a gigantic column, about three hundred feet in height, the sides barren and perpendicular, and the plain above covered with verdure to the marge itself. Immediately above their heads was a blighted elder tree, (one of the most remarkable phenomena* of this woodless district) which now hung, like a single grey hair, over the bare and barren brow of the aged cliff.

The wanderers sat here in perfect security, although by a step forward they might look upon a tremendous in-slanting precipice beneath, against the base of which, at times, the sea lashed itself with such fury, as to bound in huge masses over the very summit, and to make the cliff itself

* A sufficiently characteristic observation of Cromwell on the barrenness of the country inland, is preserved among the peasantry. "There was," he observed, "neither a tree to hang a man, fire to burn, nor water to drown him."

shake and tremble to a considerable distance inland.

"I have asked you to come here, Ellen," said her lover, as he held her hand in one of his, while the other was passed round her waist, "for a very solemn purpose. It is a belief amongst us, and many have seen it come to pass, that those who pledge themselves to any promise, whether of hate or love, and who, with their hands clasped together as ours are now, plight their faith and troth to perform that promise to one another—it is our belief, I say, that whether in the land of the living, or the dead, they can never enjoy a quiet soul until that promise is made good. I must serve five years before I obtain my discharge; when I get that, Ellen, I will return to this place, and let you know, by a token, that I am in the neighbourhood. Pledge me your hand and word, that when you receive that token, whether you are married or unmarried, whether it be dark, moonlight, or stormy, you will come out alone to meet me where I shall appoint, on the night when I shall send it."

Without much hesitation the young girl solemnly pledged herself to what he required. He then unbound from her hair a ribbon by which it was confined, kissed it, and placed it in his bosom, after which they ascended the cliff and separated.

After the departure of young Moran, his mother, to relieve her loneliness, opened a little place of entertainment for the *fish-jollers*, whose trade it was (and is) to carry the fish taken on the coast to the nearest market-town for sale, as also for the fishermen of the village, and chance passengers. By this means she had accomplished a very considerable sum of money in a few years. Ellen Sparling observed this with the more satisfaction, as she felt it might remove the greatest bar that had hitherto opposed itself to her union with Charles Moran.

Five years and some months had rolled away since his departure, and he had not been heard of during that time in his native village. All things remained very nearly in the same state in which he had left them, with the exception of the increased prosperity of his mother's circumstances, and the matured beauty of Ellen, who

was grown into a blooming woman, the admiration of all the men, and it is said, though I don't vouch for the fact, of all the women too, of her neighbourhood. There are limits of superiority beyond which envy cannot reach, and it might be said, perhaps, that Ellen was placed in this position of advantage above all her female acquaintances. It is not to be supposed that she was left untempted all this while, or at least unsought. On the contrary, a number of suitors had directly or indirectly presented themselves, with one of whom only, however, I have any business at present.

He was a young fisherman, and one of the most constant visitors at the elegant *soirées* of the widow Moran, where, however, he was by no means a very welcome guest, either to the good woman or her customers. He held, nevertheless, high place at the board, and seemed to exercise a kind of dominion over the revelers, perhaps as much the consequence of his outward appearance, as of his life and habits. He was powerfully made, tall, and of a countenance which, even in his hours of comparative calmness and inaction, exhibited in the mere

arrangement of its features a brutal violence of expression which was exceedingly repugnant. The middle portion of his physiognomy was rather flat and sunken, and his mouth and forehead projecting much, rendered this deformity disgustingly apparent. Deep black, large glistening eyes glanced from beneath a pair of brows, which so nearly approached each other, as, on every movement of passion, or impulse of suspicion, to form in all appearance one thick shaggy line across, and the unamiable effect of the countenance altogether was not improved by the temper of the man, who was feared throughout the neighbourhood, as well for his enormous strength, as for the violence, the suspicious tetchiness, and the habitual gloominess of his character, which was never more visible than when, as now, he affected the display of jollity and hearted good-fellowship. It was whispered, moreover, that he was visited, after some unusual excitement, with fits of wildness approaching to insanity, at the accession of which he was wont to conceal himself from all human intercourse for a period, until the evil influence (originating, as it was asserted pri-

vately among his old associates, in the remorse with which the recollection of his manifold crimes was accompanied) had passed away—a circumstance which seemed to augur a consciousness of this mental infirmity. At the end of those periods of retirement, he was wont to return to his companions with a haggard and jaded countenance, a dejected demeanour, and a sense of shame manifested in his address, which, for a short space only, served to temper the violence of his conduct. Robbers and murderers, as all of his associates were, this evil-conditioned man had gone so far beyond them in his total recklessness of crime, that he had obtained for himself the distinguishing appellation (like most nicknames in Irish low life, ironically applied) of Yamon Macauntha, or Honest Ned; occasionally varied (after he had reached the estate of manhood, and distinguished himself among the smugglers, over whom he acquired a speedy mastery, by his daring spirit, and almost invariable success in whatever he undertook) with that of Yamon Dhiu, or Black Ned, a name which applied as well to his dark complexion, long, matted, coal-black hair and

heard, as to the fierce and relentless energy of his disposition.

One anecdote, which was told with suppressed breath, and involuntary shuddering, even among those who were by his side in all his deeds of blood, may serve to illustrate the terrific and savage cruelty of the man. A Dutch vessel had gone to pieces on the rocks beneath the Look-out. The waves rolled in like mountains, and lashed themselves with such fury against the cliffs, that very speedily nearly all those among the crew who clung to the drifting fragments of the wreck, were dashed to atoms on the projecting granite. A few only, among whom was the captain of the vessel, who struggled with desperate vigour against the dreadful element, succeeded in securing themselves on a projecting rock, from whence, feeble and exhausted as they were, the poor mariners endeavoured to hail a number of people, who were looking out on the wreck from the cliff-head above them. They succeeded in attracting attention, and the spectators prepared to lower a rope for their relief, which, as they were always provided against such accidents, they were not

long in bringing to pass. It was first girded around the waist of the captain, and then fastened around that of his two companions, who, on giving a signal, were drawn into the air, the former holding in one hand a little casket, and with the other defending himself against the pointed projections of the cliff as he ascended. When very near the summit, which completely overhung the waves, he begged, in a faint tone, that some one would take the casket from his hands, as he feared it might be lost in the attempt to secure his own hold. Yamon was but too alert in acceding to the wretched man's request; he threw himself forward on the sand, with his breast across the rope, and took the casket from his uplifted hand.

"God's blessing on your souls, my deliverers," cried the poor man, wringing his clasped hands, with a gesture and look of fervent gratitude, "the casket is safe, thank God! thank God! and my faith to my employers——" he was yet speaking, when the rope severed under Black Yamon's breast, and the three men were precipitated into the yawning waters beneath. They were hurried out by the retiring waves, and the

next moment their mangling bodies were left in the recesses of the cliff.

A cry of horror and of compassion burst even from the savage hearts of the crew of smugglers, who had been touched by the courage and constancy which was displayed by the brave unfortunates. Yamon alone remained unmoved, (and hard must the heart have been which even the voice of gratitude, unmerited though it was, could not soften or penetrate) he gave utterance to a burst of hoarse, grumbling laughter, as he waved the casket in triumph before the eyes of his comrades:

"Huh! huh!" he exclaimed, "she was a muthaun—why didn't she keep her casket till she drew her painther ashore?"

One of the men, as if doubting the possibility of the inhuman action, advanced to the edge of the cliff. He found the rope had been evidently divided by some sharp instrument; and observing something glittering where Yamon lay, he stooped forward and picked up an open clasp-knife, which was presently claimed by the unblushing monster. However shocked they might have been at the occurrence, it was

no difficult matter for Yamon to persuade his companions that it would be nowise convenient to let the manner of it transpire in the neighbourhood ; and in a very few minutes the fate of the Dutchmen seemed completely banished from their recollection, (never very retentive of benevolent emotions) and the only question held regarded the division of the booty. They were disappointed, however, in their hopes of spoil, for the casket which the faithful shipman was so anxious to preserve, and to obtain which his murderer had made sacrifice of so many lives, contained nothing more than a few papers of bottomry and insurance, valueless to all but the owners of the vessel. This circumstance seemed to touch the villain more nearly than the wanton cruelty of which he had been guilty ; and his gang, who were superstitious exactly in proportion to their want of honesty and of all moral principle, looked upon it as a supernatural occurrence, in which the judgment of an offended Deity was made manifest.

This amiable person had a sufficiently good opinion of himself to make one among the admirers of Ellen Sparling. It is scarcely ne.

cessary to say that his suit was unsuccessful. Indeed the maiden was heard privately to declare her conviction that it was impossible there could be found any where a more ugly and disagreeable man, in every sense.

One fine frosty evening, the widow Moran's was more than usually crowded. The fire blazed cheerfully on the hearth, so as to render any other light unnecessary, although the night had already begun to close in. The mistress of the establishment was busily occupied in replenishing the wooden *noggins*, or drinking vessels, with which the board was covered; her glossy white hair turned up under a clean kerchief, and a general gala-gladness spreading an unusual light over her shrivelled and attenuated features, as by various courtesies, addressed to the company around her, she endeavoured to make the gracious in her own house. Near the chimney-corner sat Dora Keys, a dark-featured bright eyed girl, who, on account of her skill on the bagpipe, a rather unfeminine accomplishment, and a rare one in this district, (where, however, as in most parts of Ireland, music of some kind or another was constantly in high re-

quest) filled a place of high consideration among the merry-makers. The remainder of the scene was filled up with the fishermen, smugglers, and fish-jolters; the latter wrapt in their blue frieze-coats, and occupying a more unobtrusive corner of the apartment, while Yamon, as noisy and imperious as usual, sat at the head of the rude table, giving the word to the whole assembly.

A knocking was heard at the slight hurdle-door. The good woman went to open it, and a young man entered. He was well formed, though rather thin and dark skinned, and a profusion of black curled hair clustered about his temples, corresponding finely with his glancing, dark, fiery eye. An air of sadness, or of pensiveness, too, hung about him, which gave an additional interest to his appearance, and impressed the spectator with an involuntary respect. Mrs. Moran drew back with one of her lowest curtsies. The stranger smiled sadly, and extended his hand. "Don't you know me, mother?" he asked. The poor woman sprung to his neck with a cry of joy.

All was confusion in an instant. "Charles,"

—"Charlie"—"Mr. Moran"—was echoed from lip to lip in proportion to the scale of intimacy which was enjoyed by the several speakers. Many a rough hand grasped his, and many a good-humoured buffet and malediction had he to endure before the tumultuous joy of his old friends had subsided. At length, after all questions had been answered, and all old friends, the dead, the living, and the absent, had been tenderly inquired for, young Moran took his place among the guests; the amusements of the evening were renewed, and Yamon, who had felt his importance considerably diminished by the entrance of the young traveller, began to re-assume his self-constituted sovereignty.

Gambling, the great curse of society in all climes, classes, ages, and states of civilization, was not unknown or unpractised in this wild region. Neither was it here unattended with its usual effects upon the mind, heart, and happiness of its votaries. The eager manifestation of assent which passed round the circle, when the proposition of just "a hand o' five-and-forty" was made, showed that it was by no means an unusual or unacceptable resource to any per-

son present. The young exile, in particular, seemed to catch at it with peculiar readiness; and, in a few minutes, places and partners being arranged, the old woman deposited in the middle of the table a pack of cards, approaching in shape more to the oval than the oblong square, and in colour scarcely distinguishable from the black oaken board on which they lay. Custom, however, had rendered the players particularly expert at their use, and they were dealt round with as much flippancy as the newest pack in the hands of a dæmon of St. James's, in our own time. One advantage, certainly, the fashionable gamesters possessed over these primitive gamblers: the latter were perfectly ignorant of the useful niceties of play, so much in request among the former. *Old gentlemen, stags, bridges, &c.*, were matters totally unknown among our coast friends, and the only necessary consequences of play, in which they (perhaps) excelled, were the outrageous violence, good mouth-filling oaths, and the ferocious triumph which followed the winnings or the losses of the several parties.

After he had become so far acquainted with

the dingy pieces of pasteboard in his hand, as to distinguish the almost obliterated impressions upon them, the superior skill of the seafarer became apparent. Yamon, who played against him, soon began to show symptoms of turbulence, which the other treated with the most perfect coolness and indifference, still persevering in his good play, until his opponent, after lavishing abundance of abuse on every body around him, especially on his unfortunate partner in the game, acknowledged that he had no more to lose. The night had now grown late, and the guests dropping off one by one, Meran and his mother were left alone in the cottage.

"Mother," said the young man, as he threw the little window-shutter open, and admitted a gush of moonlight which illumined the whole room, "will you keep the fire stirring till I return, the night is fine, and I must go over the cliffs?"

"The cliffs! to-night, child!" ejaculated the old woman. "You don't think of it, my heart?"

"I must go," was the reply, "I have given a pledge that I dare not be false to."

"The cliffs!" continued the old woman. "The way is uncertain even to the feet that know it best, and sure you wouldn't try it in the night, and after being away till you don't know, may be, a foot o' the way."

"When I left Ellen Sparling, mother," said the young man; "I pledged her my faith, that I would meet her on the night on which she should receive from me a token she gave me. She, in like manner, gave me hers. That token I sent to her before I entered your doors this evening, and I appointed her father's old house, where he lived in his poor days, and where I first saw her, to meet me. I must keep my word on all hazards." And he flung the cottage-door open as he spoke.

"Then take care, take care," said the old woman, clasping her hands and extending them towards him, while she spoke in her native tongue. "The night, thank God! is a fine night, and the sea is still at the bottom of the cliffs, but it is an unsure path. I know the eyes

that will be red, and the cheeks that will be white, and the young and the fair ones too, if anything *contrary* should come to you this holy evening."

"I have given her my hand and word," was Moran's reply as he closed the door, and took the path over the sand-hills.

The moon was shining brightly when he reached the cliffs, and entered on the path leading to the old rendezvous of the lovers, and from thence to the ruined building, where he expected to meet Ellen. He trudged along in the light-heartedness of feeling inspired by the conviction he felt, that the happiness of the times, which every object he beheld brought to his recollection, had not passed away with those days, and that a fair and pleasant future yet lay before him. He turned off the sand-hills while luxuriating in those visions of unchecked delight.

Passing the rocks of Duggara, he heard the plashing of oars, and the rushing of a canoe through the water. It seemed to make towards a landing-place further down, and lying almost on his path. He pursued his course, supposing, as in fact proved to be the case, that it was one

of the fishermen drawing his canoe nearer to the caverns which were to be made the scene of a seal-hunt on the following day. As the little vessel glided through the water beneath him, a wild song, in the language of the country, rose to the broken crag on which he now rested, chaunted by a powerful masculine voice, with all the monotonous and melancholy intonation to which the construction of the music is peculiarly favourable. The following may be taken as a translation of the stanzas:—

I.

The Priest stood at the marriage board,
The marriage cake was made,
With meat the marriage chest was stored,
Decked was the marriage bed.
The old man sat beside the fire,
The mother sat by him,
The white bride was in gay attire
But her dark eye was dim,

Ululah!! Ululah!

The night falls quick—the sun is set,
Her love is on the water yet.

II.

I saw the red cloud in the west,
Against the morning light,
Heaven shield the youth that she loves best
From evil chance to-night.

The door flings wide ! Loud moans the gale,
Wild fear her bosom chills,
It is, it is the Banthee's wail
Over the darkened hills,
Ululah ! Ululah !
The day is past ! the night is dark !
The waves are mounting round his bark.

III.

The guests sit round the bridal bed,
And break the bridal cake,
But they sit by the dead-man's head,
And hold his wedding-wake.
The bride is praying in her room,
The place is silent all !
A fearful call ! a sudden doom !
Bridal and funeral !
Ululah ! Ululah !
A youth to Kilfiehera's ta'en
That never will return again.

Before Moran had descended much further on his way, he perceived that the canoe had reached a point of the rock close upon his route. The fisherman jumped to land, made fast the painter, and turning up the path by which Moran was descending, soon encountered him. It was Yamon Macauntha.

"Ho ! Mr. Moran ! Out on the cliffs this hour o' the night, sir?"

"Yes, I have a good way to go. Good bye to you."

"Easy a while, sir," said Yamon, "that is the same way I'm going myself, and I'll be with you."

Moran had no objection to this arrangement, although it was not altogether pleasing to him. He knew enough of the temper and habits of the smuggler to believe him capable of any design, and although he had been a stronger built man than he was, yet the odds, in case of any hostile attempt, would be fearfully in Yamon's favour. He remembered too certain rumours which had reached him of the latter being occasionally subject to fits of gloom, approaching in their strength and intensity to actual derangement, and began to hesitate as to the more advisable course to be pursued. However, not to mention the pusillanimity of anything having the appearance of retreat, such a step would in all probability have been attempted in vain, for Yamon stood directly behind him, and the path was too narrow to admit the possibility of a successful struggle. He had only to obey the motion of the fisherman and move on.

"You don't know," said the latter, "or may be you never heard of what I'm going to tell you now ; but easy, and you'll know all in a minute. Do you see that sloping rock down by the sea, where the horse-gull is standing at this minute, the same we passed a while ago. When my mother was little *better* than seven months married, being living hard by on the sand-hills, she went many's the time down to that rock, to fetch home some of the salt-water for pickle and things, and never made any work of going down there late and early, and at all hours. Well, it was as it might be this way, on a fine bright night, that she took her can in her hand, and down with her to the rock. The tide was full in, and when she turned off o' the path, what should she see fronting her, out, and sitting quite erect intirely upon the rock, only a woman, and she having the tail of her gown turned up over her head, and she sitting quite still, and never spaking a word, and her back towards my mother. '*Dieu uth,*' says my mother, careless and civil, thinking of nothing, and wanting her to move ; but she took no notice. '*Would it be troubling you if I'd just step down to get a*

drop o' the salt-water?' says my mother. Still no answer. So thinking it might be one of the neighbours that was funning, or else that it might be asleep she was, she asked her very plain and loud to move out o' the way. When there wasn't ere a word come after this, my mother stooped forward a little, and lifted the *gown* from the woman's forehead, and peeped under—and what do you think she seen in the dark, within? Two eyes as red as fire, and a shrivelly old face without any lips hardly, and they drawn back, and teeth longer than lobster's claws, and as white as the bleached bones. Her heart was down in her brogue * when *it* started up from her, and with a screech that made two halves of my mother's brains, *it* flew out over the wide sea.

“My mother went home and took to her bed, from which she never stirred till 'twas to be taken to Kilfehera church-yard. It was in that week I was born. I never pass that place at night alone, if I can help it—and that is partly the reason why I made so free to ask you to bear me company.”

* Shoe.

Moran had his confidence fully re-established by these words. He thought he saw in Yamon a wretch so preyed upon by remorse and superstition, as to be incapable of contemplating any deep crime, to which he had not a very great temptation. As Yamon still looked toward the rock beneath, the enormous horse-gull by which he had first indicated its position to Moran, took flight, and winged its way slowly to the elevation on which they stood. The bird rose above, wheeled round them, and with a shrill cry, that was repeated by a hundred echoes, dived again into the darkness underneath. Moran, at this instant, had his thoughts turned in another direction altogether, by the sight of the little recess in which Ellen and he had held their last conversation. He entered, followed by Yamon, who threw himself on the rude stone seat, observing that it was a place "for the phuka to make her bed in."

The young traveller folded his arms, and gazed around for a few minutes in silence, his heart striving beneath the load of recollections which came upon him at every glance and mo-

tion. On a sudden, a murmured sound of voices was heard underneath, and Moran stooped down, and overlooked the brink of the tremendous precipice. There was a flashing of lights on the calm waters beneath, and in a few minutes a canoe emerged from the great cavern, bearing three or four men, with lighted torches, which, however, they extinguished as soon as they came into the clear moonlight. He continued to mark them until they were lost behind a projecting crag. He then turned, and in removing his hand from the verge, detached a pebble, which, falling after a long pause into the sea, formed what is called by the peasant children, who practise it in sport, "a dead-man's skull." It is formed when a stone is cast into the water so as to emit no spray, but cutting rapidly and keenly through, in its descent, produces a gurgling evolution, bearing a momentary resemblance to the tables of a human skull. The sound ceased, and all again was still and silent, with the exception of the sound which the stirring of the waters made in the mighty caverns beneath.

"I remember the time when that would have won a button * for me," said Moran, turning round. He at the same instant felt his shoulder grasped with a tremendous force. He looked quickly up, and beheld Yamon, his eyes staring and wild with some frantic purpose, bending over him. A half-uttered exclamation of terror escaped him, and he endeavoured to spring towards the path which led from the place. The giant arm of Yamon, however, intercepted him.

"Give me, cheat and plunderer that you are," cried the fisherman, while his limbs trembled with emotion, "give me the money you robbed me of this night, or by the great light that's looking down on us, I'll shake you to pieces."

"There, Yamon, there, you have my life in your power—there is your money, and now—" He felt the grasp of the fisherman tightening upon his throat. He struggled, as a wretch might be expected to do, to whom life was new and dear; but he was as a child in the gripe of his enemy. There was a smothering shriek of

* The practice of playing for buttons is very common among the peasant children.

entreaty—a wild attempt to twine himself in the limbs and frame of the murderer—and in the next instant he was hurled over the brow of the cliff.

“Another! another life!” said Yamon Dhu, as with hands stretched out, and fingers spread, as though yet in act to grasp, he looked out over the precipice. “The water is still again—Ha! who calls me?—From the caverns?—No. —Above?—Another life!—A deal of Christian’s blood upon one man’s soul!” and he rushed from the place.

About eleven o’clock on the following morning (as fine a day as could be), a young lad named Terry Mick (Terry, the son of Mick, a species of patronymic very usual in Ireland), entered, with considerable haste, the kitchen of Mr. Morty Shannon, a gentleman farmer, besides being coroner of the county, and as jolly a man as any in the neighbourhood. Terry addressed a brief tale in the ear of Aby Gallagher, Mr. Shannon’s steward and fac-totum, which induced the said Sandy to stretch his

long, well-seasoned neck, from the chimney-corner, and directing his voice towards the door of an inner room, which was complimented with the appellation of a parlour, exclaim, "Mr. Morty! you're *calling*, sir."

"Who am I *calling*?" asked a rich, waggish voice, from within.

"Mr. Sparling, the Palatine's boy, sir," replied Aby, quite unconscious of the *quid pro quo*.

"Indeed! More than I knew myself. Walk in, Terry."

"Go in to him, Terry dear," said Aby, resuming his comfortable position in the chimney-corner, and fixing a musing, contented eye upon a great cauldron of potatoes that hung over the turf-fire, and on which the first simmering froth, or *white horse* (as it is called in Irish cottages), had begun to appear.

"The master sent me to you, sir," said Terry, opening the door, and protruding an eye, and half a face into the sanctum sanctorum, "to know—with his compliments——"

But first, I should let you have the glimpse:

that Terry got of the company within. The person to whom he immediately addressed himself sat at one end of a small deal table, on which were placed a jug of cold water, a broken bowl, half filled with coarse brown sugar, and a little jar, which, by the frequent changes of position it underwent, seemed to contain the favourite article of the three. Imagine to yourself a middle-sized man, with stout, well-set limbs, a short and thick head of hair, an indented forehead, eyes of a piercing grey, bright and sparkling, with an expression between leer and satire, and a nose running in a curvilinear direction toward the mouth. Nature had, in the first instance, given it a *sinister inclination*, and chance, wishing to rectify the *morals* of the feature, had, by the agency of a black-thorn stick, in the hands of a rebellious tenant, sent it again to the right. 'Twas kindly meant, as Mr. Morty himself used to say, though not so dexterously executed.

"The master's compliments, sir," continued Terry, "to know if your honour would just step over to Kilkee, where there has been a bad

business this morning—Charlie Moran being lying dead, on the broad of his back, at the house, over.”

When I say that an expression of involuntary satisfaction, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal, diffused itself over the tortuous countenance of the listener, at this intelligence, it is necessary I should save his character by reminding the reader that he was a county coroner, and that in addition to the four pounds which he was to receive for the inquest, there was the chance of an invitation to stay and dine with the Sparlings, people whose mode of living Mr. Morty had before now tried and approved.

“Come here, Terry, and take your morning,” said he, filling a glass of ardent spirits, which the youth immediately disposed of, with a speed that showed a sufficient familiarity with its use, although some affectation of mincing decency induced him to colour the delicious relish with a grimace and shrug of comical dislike, as he replaced the glass on the table.

“E’then, that’s good stuff, please your honour. Sure I’d know the master’s any where over the world. This is some of the two year

old, sir. 'Twas made the time Mr. Grady, the gauger, was stationed below there, at the white house—and faix, many a drop he tasted of it himself, in the master's barn."

"And is the still so long at work, Terry?"

"Oh, long life to you, sir,—aye is it, and longer too. The master has *sech* a 'cute way with him in managing the still-hunters. 'Tis in vain for people to inform—to be sure, two or three tried it, but got nothing by it, barking a good laceing at the next fair-day. Mr. Grady used regularly to send notice when he got an information, to have him on his guard against he'd come with *the army*—and they never found any thing there, I'll be your bail for it, more than what served to send 'em home as drunk as pipers, every mother's son. To be sure, that Mr. Grady was a pleasant man, and well liked wherever he came, among high and low, rich and poor, although being a gauger and a protestant. I remember making him laugh hearty enough once. He asked me, says he, as it might be funning, 'Terry,' says he, 'I'm very bad inwardly. How would you like to be walking after a gauger's funeral this morning?' 'Why

thin, Mr. Grady,' says I, 'I'd rather see a thousand of your *relligion* dead than yourself, and maneing no love for *you*, neither.' And poor man, he did laugh hearty, to be sure. He had no pride in him—no pride, more than a child, hadn't Mr. Grady. God's peace be with him, wherever he is, this day."

In a few minutes Mr. Shannon's blind mare was saddled, and the head of the animal being directed toward Kilkee, away went Terry, trotting by the coroner's side, and shortening the road with his quaint talk. On arriving at the Palatine's house, they found it crowded with the inhabitants of the village. The fairy doctor of the district sat near the door; his brown and weather-beaten face wrapped in an extraordinary degree of mystery, and his eyes fixed with the assumption of deep thought on his twirling thumbs: in another part of the outer room was the schoolmaster of the parish, discussing the "crowner's quest law," to a circle of admiring listeners. In the chimney-corner, on stools which were ranged for the purpose, were congregated the "knowledgeable" women of the district. Two soldiers, detached from the nearest

guard, were stationed at the door, and at a little distance from them, seated at a table, and basking in the morning sunshine, might be seen a number of the fishermen and others, all deeply engaged in converse upon the occurrence which had summoned them together. One of them was in the act of speaking when the coroner arrived :—

“ We had been drawing the little canoe up hard by the cavern, seeing would we be the first to be in upon the seals when the hunt would begin, when I see a black thing lying on the shore among the sea-weed, about forty yards or upwards from the rock where I stood; and ’t isn’t itself I see first, either, only two sea-gulls, and one of ’em perched up on it, while the other *kep* wheeling round above it, and screaming as nait’rel as a christen; and so I ran down to Phil, here, and says I, ‘ there’s murder down upon the rocks, let us have it in from the fishes.’ So we brought it ashore. ’Twas pale and stiff, but there was no great harm done to it, strange to say, in regard of the great rocks, and the place. We knew poor Moran’s face, and we said nothing to one another, only wrapped the

spritsail about it, and had it up here to Mr. Sparling's, (being handier to us than his own mothers) where we told our story."

Passing into the house, Mr. Morty Shannon was received with all the respect due to his exalted station. The women curtsied low, and the men raised their hands to their foreheads with that courteous action which is familiar to all, even the most unenlightened of the peasantry of the south of Ireland. The master of the mansion, a comfortable looking farmer-like sort of person, rose from his seat near the hearth, and greeted the man of office with an air of greater familiarity, yet with a reserve becoming the occasion. As the door of an inner apartment stood open, Mr. Shannon could see the corpse of the murdered man laid out on a table near the window. Close to the head stood the mother of the dead, hanging over the corpse in silent grief, swaying herself backward and forward with a gentle motion, and wringing her hands; yet with so noiseless an action, that the profound silence of the room was never broken. On the opposite side, her fine head resting against the bier—her white, wan fingers wreath-

ed together in earnest prayer above the body, while a half-stifled sob occasionally shook her delicate frame—and her long and curling tresses fall in flaxen masses over the bosom of the murdered, knelt Moran's betrothed love, Ellen Sparling. As she prayed, a sudden thought seemed to rush upon her, she raised her head, took from her bosom a light green ribbon, and kissing it fervently and repeatedly, she folded and placed it in that of the murdered youth, after which she resumed her kneeling posture. There are few, I believe, who have lived among scenes of human suffering to so little purpose as not to be aware, that it is not the heaviness of a particular calamity, nor the violence of the sorrow which it produces, that is at any time most powerful in awakening the commiseration of an uninterested spectator. The capability of deep feeling may be more or less a property of all hearts, but the power of communicating it is a gift possessed by few. The murmur of a bruised heart, the faint sigh of a broken spirit, will often stir and thrill through all the strings of sympathy, while the frantic ravings of a wilder, though not less real woe, shall fail to excite any

other sensation than that of pain and uneasiness. Perhaps it may be, that the selfishness of our nature is such, that we are alarmed and put on our guard, in proportion to the violence of the appeal which is made to us ; and must be taken by surprise, before our benevolent emotions can be awakened. However all this might be, being no philosopher, I can only state the fact, that Mr. Morty Shannon, who had witnessed many a scene of frantic agony, without experiencing any other feeling than that of impatience, was moved, even to a forgetfulness of his office, by the quiet, unobtrusive grief, which he witnessed on entering this apartment.

It was the custom in those days, and is still the custom in most parts of Ireland, where any person is supposed to have "come by his end" unfairly, that all the inhabitants of his parish, or district, particularly those who, from any previous circumstances, may be rendered at all liable to suspicion, shall meet together and undergo a kind of ordeal, by touching the corpse, each in his turn. Among a superstitious people, such a regulation as this, simple though it was, had been frequently successful in betraying the

guilty conscience; and it was a current belief among the peasantry, that in many instances where the perpetrator of the horrid deed possessed strength of mind, or callousness of heart sufficient to subdue all appearance of emotion in the moment of trial, some miraculous change in the corpse itself had been known to indicate the evil doer. At all events, there was a degree of solemnity and importance attached to the test, which invested it with a strong interest in the minds of the multitude.

Suspicion was not idle on this occasion. The occurrences of the previous evening at the widow's house, and the loss there sustained by Yamon, contributed in no slight degree to fix the attention of the majority upon him. It did not pass without remark, neither, that he had not yet made his appearance at Mr. Sparling's house. Many wild tales, moreover, were afloat respecting Ellen Sparling, who had, on that morning, before sunrise, been seen by a fish-jolter, who was driving his mule loaded with fish along the road towards Kilrush, returning across the hills toward her father's house, more like a mad-woman than a sober Christian. Be-

fore we proceed further in our tale, it is necessary we should say something of the circumstances which led to this appearance.

When Ellen received the token on the previous evening from young Moran's messenger, she tied her light chequered straw bonnet under her chin, and stole out by a back entrance, with a beating and anxious heart, to the appointed rendezvous. The old ruined house which had been named to her, was situated at the distance of a mile from her father's, and was at present tenanted only by an aged herdsman in his employment. Not finding Moran yet arrived, although the sun was already in the west, she sent the old man away on some pretext, and took his place in the little rush-bottomed chair by the fire-side. Two hours of a calm and silent evening had already passed away, and yet he came not. Wearied with the long expectation, and by the tumult of thoughts and feelings which agitated her, she arose, walked to a short distance from the cottage, and sitting on a little knoll in the vicinity, which commanded a wide prospect to the sea, she continued to await his arrival, now and then gazing in the direction of

the cliffs by which the messenger told her he was to pass. No object, however, met her eye on that path, and no sound came to her ear but the loud, full-toned, and plaintive whistle of the ploughman, as he guided his horses over a solitary piece of stubble-ground, lightening his own and their labour by the wild modulations of the *Keen-the-cawn*, or death-wail; the effect of which, though it had often delighted her under other circumstances, fell now with an oppressive influence upon her spirits.

Night fell at length, and she returned to the old house. As she reached the neglected *haggart* on the approach, a light breeze sprang up inland, and rustling in the thatch of the ruined out-houses, startled her by its suddenness, almost as much as if it had been a living voice. She looked up an instant, drew her handkerchief closer around her neck, and hurried on towards the door. It might be he had arrived by another path during her absence! High as her heart bounded at the suggestion, it sunk in proportion as she lifted the latch, and entered the deserted room. The turf-embers were almost expiring on the hearth, and all was dark, cold,

saddening, and comfortless. She felt vexed at the absence of the old servant, and regretted the caution which induced her to get rid of him. Amid all the intensity of her fondness too, she could not check a feeling of displeasure at the apparent want of ardour on the part of her lover. It had an almost slighting look; she determined she would make it evident in her manner on his arrival. In the next moment the fancied sound of a footstep made her spring from her seat, and extend her arms in a perfect oblivion of all her stern resolutions. Quite beaten down in heart by constant disappointments, and made nervous and feverish by anxiety, the most fearful suggestions began now to take the place of her pettishness and ill-humour. She was alarmed for his safety. It was a long time since he had trod the path over the cliffs. The possibility that here rushed upon her, made her cover her face with her hands, and bend forward in her chair in an agony of terror.

Midnight now came on. A short and heavy breathing at the door, as she supposed, startled her as she bent over the flame which she kept

alive by placing fresh *sods* on the embers. She rose and went to the door. A large Newfoundland dog of her father's bounded by her as she opened it, and testified by the wildest gambols about the kitchen, the delight he felt in meeting her so unexpectedly, at such an hour, and so far from her home. She patted the faithful animal on the head, and felt restored in spirits by the presence, even, of this uncommunicative acquaintance. The sagacious servant had evidently traced her to the ruin by the fineness of it's sense, and seemed overjoyed at the verification of his diagnostic. At length, after having sufficiently indulged the excitement of the moment, he took post before the fire, and after divers indecisive evolutions, he coiled himself up at her feet and slept. The maiden herself in a short time imitated the example.

The startling suggestions that had been crowding on her in her waking moments, now began to shape themselves in vivid and fearful visions to her sleeping fancy. As she lay back in her chair, her eyes not so entirely closed as to exclude the "lengthening rays," of the decaying fire before them, she became unaccount-

ably oppressed by the sense of a person sitting close at her side. There was a hissing, as if of water falling on the embers just before the figure, and after a great effort she fancied that she could turn so far round as to recognize the face of her lover, pale, cold, with the long dark hair hanging drearily at each side, and as she supposed, dripping with moisture. She strove to move, but was perfectly unable to do so, and the figure continued to approach her, until at length placing his chilling face so close to her cheek, that she thought she felt the damp upon her neck, he said gently, "Ellen, I have kept my hand and word: living I would have done it; dead, I am permitted." At this moment a low grumbling bark from the dog Minos, awoke her, and she started from her seat, in a state of nervousness which for a short time prevented a full conviction of the non-existence of the vision that had oppressed her slumber. The dog was sitting erect, and gazing, with crouched head, fixed eyes, and lips upturned in the expression of canine fear, toward the door. Ellen listened attentively for a few minutes, and a gentle knocking was heard. She recognised too, or

thought she recognised, a voice precisely similar to that of the figure in her dream, which pronounced her name with the gentlest tone in the world. What surprised her most, was that Minos, instead of starting fiercely up as was his wont, on hearing an unusual sound at night, cowed, whimpered, and slunk back into the chimney-corner. Not in the least doubting that it was her lover, she rose and opened the door. The vividness of her dream, being yet fresh upon her, and perhaps the certainty she felt of seeing him, made her imagine for the instant that she beheld the same figure standing before her. It was but for an instant, however; on looking a second time, there was no person to be seen. An overwhelming sensation of terror now rushed upon her, and she fled from the place with the rapidity of madness. In a state half-frantic, half-fainting, she reached her father's house, and flung herself on her bed, where the news of Moran's death reached her next morning.

To return, however, to the present position of our tale. A certain number of the guests were now summoned into the room where the body lay, and all things were prepared for the

ordeal. At a table near the window, with writing materials before him, was placed the worthy coroner, together with the lieutenant of the guard at the light-house, who had arrived a few minutes before. Mr. Sparling stood close by them, his face made up into an expression of wise abstraction, his hands thrust into his breeches-pockets, and jingling some half-pence which they contained. The betrothed lover of the murdered man had risen from her knees, and put on a completely altered manner. She now stood in silence, and with tearless eyes, at the head of the bier, gazing with an earnestness of purpose, which might have troubled the carriage even of diffident innocence itself, into the face of every one who approached to touch the body. Having been made aware of the suspicions afloat against Yamon, and the grounds for those suspicions, she expected with impatience the arrival of that person.

He entered at length. All eyes were instantly turned on him. There was nothing unusual in the manner or appearance of the man. He glanced round the room, nodded to a few,

touched his forehead to the coroner and the lieutenant, and then walking firmly and coolly to the centre of the apartment, awaited his turn for the trial. A very close observer might have detected a quivering and wincing of the eyelid, as he looked toward Ellen Sparling, but it was only momentary, and he did not glance in that direction a second time.

"Isn't that droll,* Shawn?" whispered Terry in the ear of the fairy doctor, who stood near him. The latter did not deem it convenient to answer in words, but he compressed his lips, contracted his brows, and threw an additional portion of empty wisdom into his physiognomy.

"E'then," continued Terry, "only mark Tim Foulloo going to touch the dead corpse all a' one any body would suspect *him* to be taking the life of a chicken, the *lahu-muthawn*," (half-natural); as a foolish looking, open-mouthed, open-eyed young booby advanced in his turn in a slow waddling gait to the corpse, and passing his hand over the face, retired with a stare

* "Droll," in Ireland, means simply *extraordinary*, and does not necessarily excite a comic association.

of comic stupidity, which, notwithstanding the awful occasion, provoked a smile from many of the spectators.

Yamon was the last person who approached the corpse. From the moment he entered, the eye of Ellen Sparling had never been withdrawn from him for an instant, and its expression now became vivid and intense. He walked to the place, however, with much indifference, and passed his hand slowly and repeatedly over the cheek and brow of the dead man. Many a head was thrust forward, as if in expectation that the inanimate lump of clay might stir beneath the feeler's touch. But no miracle took place, and they gazed on one another in silence as he slowly turned away, and folding his arms, resumed his place in the centre of the apartment.

"Well, Mr. Sparling," said his worship the coroner, "here is so much time lost: had we begun to take evidence at once, the business would be nearly at an end by this time."

The old Palatine was about to reply, when their conversation was interrupted by an exclamation of surprise from Ellen Sparling. Turn-

ing quickly round, they beheld her with one of the clenched hands of the corpse between hers, gazing on it in stirless amazement. Between the dead-stiff fingers, appeared something of a bluish colour slightly protruded. Using the utmost strength of which she was mistress, Ellen forced open the hand, and took from it a small part of the lappel of a coat, with a button attached. And letting the hand fall, she rushed through the crowd, putting all aside without looking at one, until she stood before Yamon. A glance was sufficient. In the death-struggle, the unhappy Moran had torn away this portion of his murderer's dress, and the rent was visible at the moment.

“The murderer! blood for blood!” shrieked the frantic girl, grasping his garment, and looking almost delirious with passion. All was confusion and uproar. Yamon darted one fierce glance around, and sprung toward the open door, but Ellen Sparling still clung as with a drowning grasp to her hold. He put forth the utmost of his giant strength to detach himself from her, but in vain. All his efforts seemed only to increase her strength, while they di-

minished his own. At last he bethought him of his fishing-knife, he plucked it from his belt, and buried it in her bosom. The unfortunate girl relaxed her hold, reeled, and fell on the corpse of her lover, while Yamon bounded to the door. Poor Terry crossed his way, but one blow laid him sprawling senseless on the earth, and no one cared to tempt a second. The rifles of the guard were discharged after him, as he darted over the sand-hills, but just before the triggers were pulled, his foot tripped against a loose stone, he fell, and the circumstance perhaps saved his life, (at least the marksmen said so). He was again in rapid flight before the smoke cleared away.

“*Shuil! Shuil!*” * The sand-hills! the cliffs!” was now the general shout, and the chase immediately commenced. Many minutes elapsed ere they arrived at the cliffs, and half a dozen only of the most nimble-footed just reached the spot in time to witness the last desperate resource of the murderer. He stood and looked over his shoulder for an instant, then rushing to the verge of the cliff, where it walled in the

* Come! Come!

land to a height of forty feet, he waved his hand to his pursuers, and cast himself into the sea.

The general opinion was that he had perished, but there was no trace ever seen that could make such a consummation certain. The body was never found, and it was suspected by a few, that, incredible as the story might appear, he had survived the leap, and gained the little rocky island opposite.

The few who returned at dusk to Mr. Sparling's house, found it the abode of sorrow, of silence, and of death. Even the voice of the hired keener was not called in on this occasion to mock the real grief that sat on every brow, and in every heart. The lovers were waked together, and buried in the same grave at Kilfiehera.

ST. MARTIN'S DAY.

Pericles.—That's your superstition !

Sailor.—Pardon us, sir ; with us at sea it still hath been observed, and we are strong in earnest.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre.

ST. MARTIN'S DAY.

It is, perhaps, not generally known, even in Ireland, that the Shannon, which derives its name from its patron, St. Senanus, is yet further honoured by the countenance of two minor spiritual dignitaries, St. Margaret and St. Martin. The former is looked up to in all cases of peril on the water, and every good boatman preserves a faithful copy of her extraordinary life about his person, as an infallible talisman; offering up occasionally a few paters and aves to win her more special regard. St. Martin, on the contrary, seems to receive their homage as his Satanic majesty is said to receive attention in some countries, rather out of fear than out of respect. They keep a holiday in honour of him once in the year, and seem to understand his temper so well, that if chance, or accident, should blow

them out of harbour during its tedious lapse, they anticipate, with no little degree of certainty, some unprecedented calamity.

With such prepossessions, it was no wonder it should have excited the astonishment of all the boatmen on the river, to see, on one of those festivals of rest, the Coobah, a handsome cutter-rigged turf-boat, off Ringmoylan, beating up against a strong easterly gale, which was every hour becoming more formidable. It was not that Darby Whelan, the honest, hard-visaged, weather-beaten-looking old man at the helm, or his shipmate, Brian Kennedy, were ignorant of the danger incurred in the attempt, much less had they the temerity to despise a point of faith so orthodox among all the wayfarers from Thomond-bridge to Loop-head, but they had been unfortunately becalmed at Ahanish, on the preceding night, and in the morning found there was such a high swell running, that their little vessel, deeply laden as she was with oats, would, in all probability, fill at anchor. With hearts little willing, they therefore got under weigh, choosing, as it were, the less immediate of two evils. But even this, they very soon found

occasion to repent, for the wind, tack after tack, grew fiercer, and their hopes became infinitely more precarious. The waves were, now and then, breaking in frightful swells over the lee gunwale, and the prow was sometimes so buried in foam, that Brian, for moments, knee-deep on the forecastle, doubted if it would ever rise above water again.

There were ever and anon silent glances cast from stem to stern, between him and Darby, and perhaps there was as much of boldness and of caution, of eloquence and of argument, in these mute debates, as in the more wordy councils of prouder vessels, when in equal peril. At length, after luffing in a heavy squall, during which they took in something less than a ton of water, Darby gave Brian a look, tossed back his head, and, putting up the helm, bore away with a free sheet, resolved to run the boat ashore wherever they could make the best ground. In less than an hour they were stuck firm in the mud, on one of the islands in the mouth of the Clare river, the tremendous speed with which she was going having swept her almost high and dry out of the waters.

After having stowed the sails, and set all on deck right, they repaired to the cabin, a little room partitioned off at the bow of the boat, to the shape of which it strictly corresponded. There was a small brick hearth at the fore part, the turf upon which was manifesting a fair intention of translating itself into a snug fire; broken pipes, which had exchanged their original snow-white hue for the dun Ethiopian, with an old japanned tobacco-box, lay scattered on the hob; and overhead, strung through the gills on a piece of spun-yarn, waved half a dozen dried herrings, which they proceeded instantly to stretch full length over the fire, arranging them rank and file on a piece of bent iron hoop, which, though generally officiating in the higher department of a tongs, was sometimes thus constrained to act the gridiron. After regaling themselves duly, and deciding, on a reference to the state of the tide, that the boat could not float until day-break, they lay down to rest in the straw, where, as they were alone, they had fair and free room to stretch their limbs. The full felicity of this latter piece of good fortune will be readily appreciated, when it is mentioned,

that those apartments are seldom over six feet square, especially in that class of traders which do not mount a jib, and that they not unfrequently accommodate from sixteen to eighteen passengers, a circumstance that, it must be admitted, would be altogether impossible, but for the unanimity and social complacency with which they stow themselves, one over another, like the corn-bags in the hold.

They were not above two or three hours asleep, when Brian was awakened by having fallen over on Darby, on account of the heeling of the boat; in a few moments after, he was rolled back again by a heave to the contrary side; and, in short, she seemed to lean, now at that side, and now at this, for all the world as if she was tacking or beating against a gentle head-wind. Brian was, as may be well supposed, fairly puzzled at so extraordinary a phenomenon, and immediately shook up his friend,—"E'then Darby, man, glushan-thu?*" Sure it isn't sailing we are?" "Wisha, that you mightened, Brian Kennedy, and to waken me

* Do you hear?

out of my fine sleep, and the drame I had," grumbled his companion; "is it in the slob* you'd have her sail?" and after some little discussion, they went to rest again. But they had not been long asleep, when Brian a second time started up in the straw, and listening quietly, heard a gurgling and dashing at the bow, as if the boat was making her way through uneven waters, a heavy swell now and then rolling by; and sometimes the sounds of ropes pulling about, and of light footsteps passing to and fro upon the deck. "Murder alive!" cried he to himself, "what can all this mean?" and he shook up the old helmsman in more alarm than before—"Darby, Darby, I say, a blessed end to me, (and that's what I wouldn't swear in a lie whatever) if I didn't hear the noise of people upon deck—whuisht! Come up, I tell you—she's under weigh, surely." "Under way, the devil," exclaimed Darby, "and the tide not within a cable's length of us—I tell you, man, 'tis only rocking with the wind, and making a bed for herself in the slob, she is." "But the ropes, man, and the tramping," ejaculated Brian,

* Slob—mud.

"I'd take my cross, barring 't isn't something that's not good, that there's somebody has come aboard of us." "Wisha, then, 'tis to your cost you'd take it, maybe," rejoined Darby, "arn't I listening; and isn't it only the breeze that's blowing the sheets and halliards about?" "Very well, why," muttered Brian, as half incredulous and dissatisfied, he lay down a third time, but he was so uneasy that he only fell into a kind of broken doze, out of which he was awakened by a low humming in his ear. On raising his head, to his utter amazement he heard some one singing at the helm.

"I'm a Turk, or a Jew at the least, every pin's point of me," ejaculated Brian, softly, "if that isn't the voice of Tony Taafe, himself, that was drown'd in the Seahorse, off the Beeves,* as good as three years ago, the Lord save us from hurt or harm! E'then Darby—monom, but you're a queer Darby, (finding it impossible to awaken him) but I'll have a peep upon deck meself, at any rate."

In prosecution of this doughty resolution, Brian crept up to the hatchway, and displaying

* A reef of rocks in the centre of the river Shannon.

as small a proportion of his head as was at all consistent with the attainment of his object, he found the boat was indeed under full sail, and scudding to the southward, close to wind, while a little fellow, no higher than his knee, stood at the foresheet ready to back the sail, when they should put about. Half a dozen more, not a hair's-breadth higher, were swinging and straining at the peak halliards with all their might. Another dressed in a tattered blue jacket and trowsers, and red waistcoat, sat upon one of the corn-bags, swinging his leg to and fro, and looking up at the clouds; and at the helm was the identical Tony Taafe, but not one third of the size he was formerly, when Brian knew him, though even then not considered a tall man. Amidst all his amazement, however, nothing appeared so extraordinary to him, as to see his master's favourite grey mare stuck in the midst of the oat-bags, and her new saddle and bridle on. What it takes minutes to describe, is seen in a twinkling. The outer half of his right eye had hardly risen above the edge of the hatchway, in view of these marvels, when he was spied by the little man at the foresheet, and almost as

instantly tumbled back into the cabin, by a kick in the forehead, which, though from a limb little stouter than the shank of a curliou, came as weighty and effective as if it had been achieved by the strongest horse in the county.

It would have been all tolerably well, if the business had ended there, but in the turning of a hand, and before Brian had well recovered the stunning effects of the salutation he had received, down hopped five or six of them, with Tony and the forecastle man at their head, screeching and screaming after him. He now began seriously to entertain suspicions that his last hour was at hand, and stretching over his arm, made a last effort, by pinching and nudging, to awaken Darby, but he lay as sound as the seven sleepers, indifferent or insensible to all his attempts. Brian, at length, went so far as to whisper his name in his ear, when another blow of the same tiny foot, by which he had before suffered, stretched him as helpless, though not quite as unconscious as his comrade.

He now found 'twas better to take things quietly, and lying as motionless, and almost as breathless as a corpse, contented himself with

observing, from beneath his depressed eyelids, in what manner they intended to dispose of him. It soon appeared that they had either forgotten him altogether, or, perhaps, fancied he had already been put beyond the pale of interference, for they at once gathered round the hearth; as if there was no one in the cabin but themselves, and placing two or three sods of turf upright in the centre of the ashes, had them a-blaze in a moment; a circumstance the more remarkable, as the last spark of fire had gone out two or three hours before. A grey-headed, crabbed-looking old crone, with her hair combed back, and a three-cornered handkerchief tied close over it, whom Brian had not noticed hitherto, now threw down a wallet off her shoulders, and dragging out dead rabbits, hens, chickens, with several animals of a rarer description, not included in Brian's zoological table, cast them one by one into a small iron pot, till she had as many, one would swear, as might fill a moderate sized washing tub, and yet they scarcely occupied one half of the little iron receptacle. She then uncorked a bottle, which was slung in a belt at her left breast, like a little ink-horn, and emp-

tioned it among the above-mentioned fare. It was new wonder to Brian to see it keep pouring, pouring, without apparent exhaustion, until, at least, a gallon of a reddish kind of liquor, not unlike wine, was obtained, which she stirred up carefully by means of a long rod, with the rest, while the turf blazed up merrily about the vessel, and very soon set it boiling.

As the light now began to penetrate the thick volumes of smoke that floated about the circle, sometimes enveloping it in dense clouds, sometimes rising towards the deck above, and unveiling only indistinct and misty forms, it fell in quivering and uncertain gleams on the faces and garments of the company. Brian gradually caught, in the momentary lighting up, looks and features not wholly new to him. On the left of the little hearth was a thin, yellow, shrivelled being, who might have served for a miniature design of the ghost of famine, with his long face and hollow eyes sunk down between his projecting shoulders, and the whole figure crouched up with chin on knees in the straw. This he remembered for a fat, ruddy-cheeked, jolly huntsman, who lived near Shanagolden, and

was well known at every public-house by roadside, blessed-well, cross, or village, from thence to the borders of Kerry. He was late one night returning by the old road from Glin, and was found dead next morning, with his nose in a little stream that trickled across the road, near Peggy Kilbridge's old barn. Between him and Tony Taafe, was a grave looking fellow, stuck up in a corner, smoking. His pipe was supported by his hand, and his elbow based upon a little pedestal of turf which lay beside him. He seemed to look upon all that was going forward with the most imperturbable indifference; and but for the twitching up of the right angle of his mouth, as it opened momentarily, and with a mechanical regularity, to emit the smoke, and the occasional application of the finger to the contents of the pipe, he might, in the dingy light, have furnished one of the masters of the Flemish school with a memorandum for a drollery. Brian immediately recognised him for a relative of his own, one Shamus Rhue, an apathetic sort of fellow, that, so he had a potato to eat, and tobacco to smoke, thought the world went well enough with him; and who rambled

about the country for work, when he ought to be tilling his own garden—*signs on*, he was always at a loss when every one else was digging the white-eyes. It was a long time since Brian had seen him before, and he was now a little surprised at the company he found him in. Shamus cast one glance at him when he first came in, as much as to say, is it you that's there? but deigned to take no further notice of him, which was the more inexplicable, as they were both near neighbours when at home. All the rest were perfect strangers, and formed, indeed, the busiest and most talkative part of the group. No one could think of half what they said, they spoke so fast; and there was so great an uproar, but such points of the dialogue, as more directly appertained to himself, made too deep an impression on Brian's mind to be forgotten.

"Arn't you the droll boy, then, Tommy Meehan," observed the little red-vested man, of whom, before, honourable mention has been made, "and to set Jem Driscoll's boat adrift, off Sod Island?" "May be 'twasn't of his own airning why," replied a hoarse voice, from the centre of a column of smoke to windward.

"Wasn't I listening to him, at Mrs. Quinlivan's, a Saturday night last, and the crowd about, and he making his fun of us, over his noggin?"

"Begannies, 'tis paying the reckoning he is now, any way," observed the man of the fore-sheet. "Struck upon the Beeves, I'll be bail, with a plank or two driven in."

"You ought to hold your tongue about that same, at any rate, Paddy," rejoined the voice, "'tis little help to your foot awhile ago, that would have made Brian Kennedy a dish for the porpoises."

"There's reason in every thing," retorted Paddy, "for what did the blackguard presume to be spying and obsarving us? tisn't to that traitment he'll be trusting, if I comes across him again."

Brian here shut his eyes so close, that he could get but very indistinct glimpses of the speakers.

"Shasthone!" ejaculated the withered little huntsman on the left, in a tone that partook half of surprise, and half of disapproval, "'tis well to have the mending hand, any how, if 'twas at the murthering itself; but I'm thinking there's

better employment than to be talkin at all of it, and the master's grey mare all in a lather in the hold. Who's to take her home, eroo?"

"Who but them that brought her, an had the ridin of her?" cried Tony Taafe, now turning round, and joining in the conversation for the first time, "who but Tommy Meehan?"

"E'then, bad 'cess to her for a garron," ejaculated Tom, assenting, "'tis little divarsion I had out of her; but (jogging the old woman's elbow), come, Granny, give us a taste o' your cooken, av we are to be on the trot."

The pot was immediately drawn out to the edge of the hearth, and the crone, rousing herself up, commenced serving them in turn with a cup of the steaming liquor. They all seemed to drink with great relish, and got very merry, especially honest Tony, who became so good-humoured that Brian had a strong inclination to speak to him, and, indeed, eventually took an opportunity, when he was leaning back in a fit of laughter, to whisper in his ear, "Erah, Tony, is it you in earnest that's there?" But Tony stopped laughing, and looked at him in astonishment, never saying a word for some

time. At last, stooping over when nobody was looking, he muttered in a low tone, "Brian Kennedy, if you value the life that's in you, 'tisn't for the likes of you to spake to us." Just at the same moment, Paddy of the foresheet, who had drunk more than the rest, in the height of his good humour, and perhaps somewhat repentant of his late harsh treatment of Brian, demanded a cup of the beverage for him,—a piece of generosity which was hailed with acclaim by the whole party, and nothing was heard all around, but astounding shouts of "A cup for Brian Kennedy!" "A cup for Brian Kennedy!" Meantime he was roused up by his neighbour Tony, that he might be aware of the honour intended him.

Brian, who had often heard of the danger of partaking fairy food, and how irrecoverably unsuspicious poor fellows had been kidnapped away in that manner, rose up like a man about to swallow poison. He stared around the circle again and again, with a dubious, inquisitive look, as it were to catch some friendly hint, or to question the risk, by diving into the eyes of the company. They were all sparkling with delight,

and at length, half assured, he was raising the cup to his lips, when the sedate face of his old friend, Shamus Rhue, caught his attention in the corner. He thought he saw him wink at him, once or twice, and, only that he had at the same moment stirred up the ashes in his pipe with his finger, to which it might possibly be an accompaniment, Brian could not mistake the hint. A shake of the head, the next minute, decided the matter, and so terrified was he at the warning, that he instantly let fall the vessel, inadvertently ejaculating a loud "Lord save us!" as it went to pieces. There was an instant *clear decks* among the gentlemen, as is usual when any pious invocation is made use of in their presence; a circumstance which never fails to excite their eternal enmity. A whirring noise announced their dispersion in all directions, and before it had done vibrating in his ears, Brian found himself in utter darkness, by the side of Darby Whelan.

He did not venture to stir, scarce to breathe, for a little while, but every thing being still and lonesome about him, he at last gradually lifted up the lid of one eye, and then of another, and

looking round, was highly delighted to see the grey of the morning peeping in at the hatchway. Full of apprehension lest Tom Meehan should have got hold of the helm in the night-voyage, and put the boat up on some shoal, or reef of rocks, he stole silently on deck, and glanced tremblingly to the land and water about ~~her~~. 'Twould be difficult to say whether his joy or his astonishment was greatest, to find the Coo-bah just beginning to float, in the very spot where they had run her on the mud on the previous evening. He instantly fell dancing on the forecastle, swinging his arms, snapping his fingers, and kicking the sheets and oars about, until Darby, awakened by so tremendous a noise, poked his head up, wrapped in its greasy cloth nightcap, and opened his eyes, as if Brian had fallen out of the moon. The latter continued his extravagance, nevertheless, but after putting Darby's patience a little to the test, and enjoying his perplexed stare, he condescended to communicate the extraordinary events of the night. It would have been excessively provoking to one like Brian, whose five senses were so many corroborating evidences in favour of his

narration, to have even a shadow of doubt thrown on it. Judge, then, what must have been his feeling, to see Darby laugh outright in his face, and insist on it that it was only a dream. In vain did he appeal to the black mark on his forehead, or to the diminution of the oats in the hold, the other stoutly insisted that the sails were clued up just as he had left them, the tiller lying precisely in the same spot, and moreover, he was himself so wakeful at night, that he would have heard the pit-a-pat of a mouse overhead, not to speak of the noise necessarily attendant on the working of the boat. Darby, however, became much less strenuous in his incredulity on observing, as they passed the Beeves in their voyage up, Jem Driscoll's little cruiser a wreck upon the rocks. But he was altogether astounded by the weight of conviction, on his return to Loughill, when he learned that Mr. O'Shaughnessy's grey mare had been spirited out of the stable the night before, and ridden almost to death—the stable-boy having found her in her stall in the morning, covered with foam and mud, and yet the door fast locked'

just as he had left it when retiring to bed.—
“’Twas the wonder of all the neighbours, an of
the country wide, moreover, an why wouldn’t
it?” added Darby, “an a long warnen, into the
bargin, to all boatmen, how they’d venthir out
ov a day that they wouldn’t have any purtection
agen them that it isn’t good to mention.”

THE BROWN MAN.

All sorts of cattle he did eat,
Some say he eat up trees,
And that the forest sure he would,
Devour up by degrees.
For houses and churches, were to him geese and turkeys,
He ate all and left none behind,
But some stones, dear Jack, which he could not crack,
Which on the hills you'll find.

Dragon of Wantley.



THE BROWN MAN.

THE common Irish expression of "the seven devils," does not, it would appear, owe its origin to the supernatural influences ascribed to that numeral, from its frequent association with the greatest and most solemn occasions of theological history. If one were disposed to be fancifully metaphysical upon the subject, it might not be amiss to compare credulity to a sort of mental prism, by which the great volume of the light of speculative superstition is refracted in a manner precisely similar to that of the material, every day sun, the great refractor thus showing only *blue* devils to the dwellers in the good city of London, *orange* and *green* devils to the inhabitants of the sister (or rather step-daughter), island, and so forward until the seven component hues are made out, through the other nations of the earth. But what has

this to do with the story? In order to answer that question, the story must be told.

In a lonely cabin, in a lonely glen, on the shores of a lonely lough, in one of the most lonesome districts of west Munster, lived a lone woman named Guare. She had a beautiful girl, a daughter named Nora. Their cabin was the only one within three miles round them every way. As to their mode of living, it was simple enough, for all they had was one little garden of white cabbage, and they had eaten that down to a few heads between them, a sorry prospect in a place where even a handful of *prishoc* weed was not to be had without sowing it.

It was a very fine morning in those parts, for it was only snowing and hailing, when Nora and her mother were sitting at the door of their little cottage, and laying out plans for the next day's dinner. On a sudden, a strange horseman rode up to the door. He was strange in more ways than one. He was dressed in brown, his hair was brown, his eyes were brown, his boots were brown, he rode a brown horse, and he was followed by a brown dog.

"I'm come to marry you, Nora Guare," said the Brown Man.

"Ax my mother fusht, if you plaise, sir," said Nora, dropping him a curtsy.

"You'll not refuse, ma'am," said the Brown Man to the old mother, "I have money enough, and I'll make your daughter a lady, with servants at her call, and all manner of fine doings about her." And so saying, he flung a purse of gold into the widow's lap.

"Why then the heavens speed you and her together, take her away with you, and make much of her," said the old mother, quite bewildered with all the money.

"Agh, agh," said the Brown Man, as he placed her on his horse behind him without more ado. "Are you all ready now?"

"I am!" said the bride. The horse snorted, and the dog barked, and almost before the word was out of her mouth, they were all whisked away out of sight. After travelling a day and a night, faster than the wind itself, the Brown Man pulled up his horse in the middle of the Mangerton mountain, in one of the most lonesome places that eye ever looked on.

"Here is my estate," said the Brown Man.

"A'then, is it this wild bog you call an estate?" said the bride.

"Come in, wife; this is my palace," said the bridegroom.

"What! a clay-hovel, worse than my mother's!"

They dismounted, and the horse and the dog disappeared in an instant, with a horrible noise, which the girl did not know whether to call snorting, barking, or laughing.

"Are you hungry?" said the Brown Man.
"If so, there is your dinner."

"A handful of raw white-eyes, * and a grain of salt!"

"And when you are sleepy, here is your bed," he continued, pointing to a little straw in a corner, at sight of which Nora's limbs shivered and trembled again. It may be easily supposed that she did not make a very hearty dinner that evening, nor did her husband neither.

In the dead of the night, when the clock of Mucruss Abbey had just tolled one, a low neigh-

* A kind of potato.

ing at the door, and a soft barking at the window were heard. Nora feigned sleep. The Brown Man passed his hand over her eyes and face. She snored. "I'm coming," said he, and he arose gently from her side. In half an hour after she felt him by her side again. He was cold as ice.

The next night the same summons came. The Brown Man rose. The wife feigned sleep. He returned, cold. The morning came.

The next night came. The bell tolled at Mucruss, and was heard across the lakes. The Brown Man rose again, and passed a light before the eyes of the feigning sleeper. None slumber so sound as they who *will* not wake. Her heart trembled, but her frame was quiet and firm. A voice at the door summoned the husband.

"You are very long coming. The earth is tossed up, and I am hungry. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! if you would not lose all,"

"I'm coming!" said the Brown Man. Nora rose and followed instantly. She beheld him at a distance winding through a lane of frost-nipt sallow trees. He often paused and looked

back, and once or twice retraced his steps to within a few yards of the tree, behind which she had shrunk. The moon-light, cutting the shadow close and dark about her, afforded the best concealment. He again proceeded, and she followed. In a few minutes they reached the old Abbey of Mucruss. With a sickening heart she saw him enter the church-yard. The wind rushed through the huge yew-tree and startled her. She mustered courage enough, however, to reach the gate of the church-yard and look in. The Brown Man, the horse, and the dog, were there seated by an open grave, eating something; and glancing their brown, fiery eyes about in every direction. The moon-light shone full on them and her. Looking down towards her shadow on the earth, she started with horror to observe it move, although she was herself perfectly still. It waved its black arms, and motioned her back. What the feasters said, she understood not, but she seemed still fixed in the spot. She looked once more on her shadow; it raised one hand, and pointed the way to the lane; then slowly rising from the ground, and confronting her, it walked

rapidly off in that direction. She followed as quickly as might be.

She was scarcely in her straw, when the door creaked behind, and her husband entered. He lay down by her side, and started.

"Uf! Uf!" said she, pretending to be just awakened, "how cold you are, my love!"

"Cold, inagh? Indeed you're not very warm yourself, my dear, I'm thinking."

"Little admiration I shouldn't be warm, and you laving me alone this way at night, till my blood is snow broth, no less."

"Umph!" said the Brown Man, as he passed his arm round her waist. "Ha! your heart is beating fast?"

"Little admiration it should. I am not well, indeed. Them pzaties and salt don't agree with me at all."

"Umph!" said the Brown Man.

The next morning as they were sitting at the breakfast-table together, Nora plucked up a heart, and asked leave to go to see her mother. The Brown Man, who eat nothing, looked at her in a way that made her think he knew all. She felt her spirit die away within her.

"If you only want to see your mother," said he, "there is no occasion for your going home. I will bring her to you here. I didn't marry you to be keeping you gadding."

The Brown Man then went out and whistled for his dog and his horse. They both came; and in a very few minutes they pulled up at the old widow's cabin-door.

The poor woman was very glad to see her son-in-law, though she did not know what could bring him so soon.

"Your daughter sends her love to you, mother," says the Brown Man, the villain, "and she'd be obliged to you for a *loand* of a *shoot* of your best clothes, as she's going to give a grand party, and the dress-maker has disappointed her."

"To be sure and welcome," said the mother; and making up a bundle of the clothes, she put them into his hands.

"Whogh! whogh!" said the horse as they drove off, "that was well done. Are we to have a mail of her?"

"Easy, ma-coppuleen, and you'll get your.

'nough before night," said the Brown Man, "and you likewise, my little dog."

"Boh!" cried the dog, "I'm in no hurry—I hunted down a doe this morning that was fed with milk from the horns of the moon."

Often in the course of that day did Nora Guare go to the door, and cast her eye over the weary flat before it, to discern, if possible, the distant figures of her bridegroom and mother. The dusk of the second evening found her alone in the desolate cot. She listened to every sound. At length the door opened, and an old woman, dressed in a new *jock*, and leaning on a staff, entered the hut. "O mother, are you come?" said Nora, and was about to rush into her arms, when the old woman stopped her.

"Whisht! whisht! my child!—I only stepped in before the man to know how you like him? Speak softly, in dread he'd hear you—he's turning the horse loose, in the swamp, abroad, over."

"O mother, mother! such a story!"

"Whisht! easy again—how does he use you?"

"Sarrow worse. That straw my bed, and

them white-eyes—and bad ones they are—all my diet. And 't isn't that same, only——"

"Whisht! easy, agin! He'll hear you, may be—Well?"

"I'd be easy enough only for his own doings. Listen, mother. The fusht night, I came about twelve o'clock——"

"Easy, speak easy, eroo!"

"He got up at the call of the horse and the dog, and staid out a good hour. He ate nothing next day. The second night, and the second day, it was the same story. The third——"

"Husht! husht! Well, the third night?"

"The third night I said I'd watch him. Mother, don't hold my hand so hard He got up, and I got up after him Oh, don't laugh, mother, for 'tis frightful I followed him to Mucruss church-yard Mother, mother, you hurt my hand I looked in at the gate—there was great moonlight there, and I could see every thing as plain as day."

"Well, darling—husht! softly! What did you see?"

"My husband by the grave, and the horse, Turn your head aside, mother, for your

breath is very hot . . . and the dog and they eating.—Ah, you are not my mother!" shrieked the miserable girl, as the Brown Man flung off his disguise, and stood before her, grinning worse than a blacksmith's face through a horse-collar. He just looked at her one moment, and then darted his long fingers into her bosom, from which the red blood spouted in so many streams. She was very soon out of all pain, and a merry supper the horse, the dog, and the Brown Man had that night, by all accounts.

PERSECUTIONS OF JACK-EDY.

First, for your dwarf, he's little and witty,
And every thing, as 'tis little, is pretty ;
Else, Why do men say to a creature of my shape,
So soon as they see him, " It's a pretty little ape ?"
Beside, this feat body of mine doth not crave
Half the meat, drink, and cloth, one of your bulk will have.

Velpons, or The Fox.



PERSECUTIONS OF JACK-EDY.

THE person whose name is prefixed to this little tale, was the smallest and most celebrated, or, to speak antithetically, was at once the least and the greatest man about the village of Ballyhahil. He was just a bundle* and a-half high, that is, some six or eight inches above the far-famed Borowlasky, of Poland; or, as near as may be, to the stature of Bébé, his predecessor at the court of Stanislaus. His notoriety, and still more his accidentally falling into contrast with a neighbour whose dimensions ran into the opposite extreme, had elevated him to the rank of a very useful member of the community; the antiperistasis so far, however, being of equal advantage to both, as they thus became standards of the minimum and maximum in the

* A bundle measures two feet.

way of human admeasurement. Indeed, independent of his long neighbour, our hero might be said to stand as a kind of zero, admitting of an immense range of comparison above or below him. No expressions were more common than "smaller than Jack-Edy"—"about the height of Jack-Edy"—"bigger than Jack-Edy." Sometimes one might hear, in the description of some rustic Falstaff, a fellow "that would put Jack-Edy in his pocket;" or a farmer grumbling about the appearance of his wheat-crop, delivering himself by an oath, that Jack-Edy could see "clear and clean" above the waving ears, from one end of the field to the other.

It may be well imagined a person of such general consequence was a great favourite; indeed, if one were inclined to prose a little, and could feel assured the patience of his readers was perfectly inexhaustible, he would find subject enough in the constant association that connects the dwarf with the droll and humorous; while every other vagary of nature, whether in the shape of giant or monster, seems usually linked in the mind with the terrific or

disgusting. From the flood, (not to go unnecessarily far back) to the close of the last century, they have afforded nearly equal amusement to the king and the mendicant, and, strange to say, even

“ those demi-puppets that,
By moonshine, do the green sour ringlets make
Whereof the ewe not bites—”

of whom it is more to our purpose here to talk, have shewn by every account, nearly an equal passion for their contemporary diminutives of the human race. We need scarce refer to the family jars between Oberon and Titania, about a little fellow, whom the latter, with the usual fairy-like indifference to all sense of morality, “ stole from an Indian king;” or to the well-known fact, universally admitted by Irish story-tellers, that their little lords and pigmies are, of late, more to be pitied than ever, to such an extent has the kidnapping system spread among “ the gentlemen.”

Whether with them this curious fancy originated in a desire to select for their vassals such as were least likely to bring their own Lilliputianism into contemptible contrast, or that they found them more “ smart and handy,” quicker

at work, and more commodious at doubling up in a buttercup when occasion served, or what, perhaps, might seem a still higher consideration, that they proved more merry and mischievous, it is difficult to determine. If such qualities were in any degree tempting, dwarfs, without doubt, have been ever remarkable for the perfection in which they possessed them; and, perhaps, none more so than the subject of our tale, whose cleverness, and, in sooth, good fortune in foiling all the attempts on his little person, which his natural attractions suggested, became the subject of universal admiration in his neighbourhood.

It could not be said that Jack-Edy's exterior, although striking and expressive, was decidedly beautiful; there were many points in his figure which, perhaps, could only be duly estimated by natures essentially congenial with his own. He was lame, high-shouldered, and short-necked, had a nose by no means approaching the happy mean, slightly ascending, and, as it were, turning back again towards the extremity, and a pair of eyes, as his companions used to express it, placed *corner-ways*; which, with the continual

leer in his look, gave him a comical, and sometimes half-malicious air. His gait and manner corresponded with his appearance; and, taken altogether, he was one whom a person of the slightest penetration would at once select for sport or for mischief. From childhood up he had himself a kind of instinctive feel that he would be considered a perfect gem among a race to whom these seemed almost the end and aim of existence; and hence he, at a very early period, became suspicious of any advances. By constant observation, their ways became so familiar to him, that he could seldom, if ever, be taken unawares; and, indeed, eventually, his information and vigilance seemed so extraordinary, it was by many shrewdly suspected he must have derived them from other sources than his natural genius could afford.

Be this as it may, it was evident to the country no pains were spared on the part of "the good people" to out-general, and by hook or crook decoy or trap him to their raths or castles. At one time wrapping him up in a whirlwind of dust, until he became so blinded as scarce to find his way home; at another, tempting him

from his road with the most delicious music, now beguiling him with the voice of some absent friend, and now laying spells upon such herbs or flowers as he might chance to pluck. But Jack's old grandmother had instructed him too well how to act, in all such emergencies, for him to feel the slightest apprehension.

Of all the perils that encompassed him, there was only one which was real and alarming, the great demand he was in among the mountaineers, in consequence of the exquisite judgment he was found to possess in a certain ethereal nectar, which had been, time out of mind, manufactured in his neighbourhood; far from the evil eye of the gauger. Ballyhahil, the village in which we have said he resided, is situated in a glen on the banks of the wild and romantic river Ovaan. Far up the windings of this tortuous stream, where it babbled through a dark wooded ravine, a light steam o'ertopping the trees, and curling and condensing in the cool mist of the morning, was ever sufficient signal to Jack-Edy that his opinion was required, as to the strength and flavour of the *doublings*;^{*}

* The second distillation.

and although the ramble was long, and the winter's-day short, from which he might often infer the probability of a night journey home, he was seldom known to flinch from his duty to friends on such occasions. So perfect was his taste, indeed, that one cupful might frequently have satisfied his mind, and so precluded the necessity of much delay; but however convincing such evidence might have been, he held his reputation much too sacred to pronounce an immediate judgment. A second cup was essential, and sometimes a third; nay, he frequently found it expedient to delay his final decision until the day was well wasted, or even to the subsequent morning.

Jack always observed that his intellects became much clearer during his sojourn in the mountain; even his senses seemed to partake of the improvement, as he invariably found when returning from it, he could see farther, and much more, than when on his way to visit it, sometimes twice as much as any one else could. Yet it was upon such occasions, especially, the plots and ambushes of the good people were most cunningly laid to intercept him. Of his

escapes, the two following have reached our ears :

On one of those days when his senses had attained a higher degree of perfection than usual, it waxed late before he set out on his return to Ballyhahil ; and as he was anxious to overtake his friend Thady Hourigan, who had started a short time before him, he pushed on at a merry rate. Sometimes he thought he heard the tramp of Thady's huge brogues on the road before him, sometimes that he saw his shadow on the next ascent ; but he ran or called to no purpose ; the person before neither returned an answer, nor bated his speed. " Od rot you, for a Thady Hourigan," says Jack, " I never knew your ayquals for deafness at any rate."

Night had now fallen, but so far from obscuring the pathway, his only difficulty arose from the multiplicity of them that diverged in every direction before him. He had got into the fields for the sake of a *short cut*, and was just thinking within himself which direction he should take, when, all on a sudden, he heard at a little distance on his left, Thady Hourigan

whistling the Fox's Sleep. Jack pushed on to the left with fresh spirits.

But though he sprung like a greyhound over hedge and ditch, and the heavy drops of perspiration began already to run down his temples, he did not seem to gain perceptibly on the provoking Thady. Now and then, indeed, the whistling seemed louder and nearer, but the next moment it died away in the distance, inso-much that little Jack at last began to despair, and then, for the first time, recollected the danger "of follying a voice or sound in the night-time," and bethought him, if it was Thady himself that was there, he'd hardly "make so bould as to be whistlin."

Jack-Edy now looked about him. It was all still and dark, except in the south, where he saw the moon rising over the moors above Ballyhabill, but at what distance, or at which side of the village he was, *he didn't know at all*. At length, putting his ear near the ground, with his hand over it, he heard low, drowsy, monotonous sounds, which evidently came from no great distance. "There isn't a cotner in Cork," cried Jack, to himself, jumping on his legs, "if that

isn't Davy Foulloo's mill; but sure, for what should it be going this time o' night, and Davy gone to Askeaton yesterday? E'then, may be, 'tis my own little handful of whate they'd be grinding; but Monom-on-gloria if it isn't close upon the Loughill-leap I've got, instead of my own little cabin in Ballyhahil."

Jack found his surmises about the mill perfectly correct—it was at work, hard and fast, but he could see no light within. When he came to the door, it was fast shut, and on peeping through the keyhole, what was his astonishment to behold, by the beams of moonlight that broke in through a chink, serving for a window, in the top of the building, poor Thady Hourigan himself tackled to the machinery, instead of Davy Foulloo's mule, and a little fellow in a brown jacket and sugar-loaf cap lashing him round with a huge cart-whip. He saw others, in different habits, as busy as bees, in all corners of the house—some feeding the hopper—some receiving the flour—some filling the bran into bags—and, in short, nothing could be equal to the bustle and industry with which the business went on.

" Hoa there, below," cried a fellow from the upper part of the building, " Stop work, there's enough for to-night, and lavins. I've just word that Davy Foulloo's on his way home, and, moreover, it's a long way we have to go." " But the bag wants odds of half a stone of being full yet," returned a grey-coated, wrinkled old man, who was engaged in packing the flour. " No matter for that, Donald Bawn," cried the voice above, " we can't stay here any longer ; but if you look in the corner below, you'll find two little bags belonging to lame Jack-Edy; fill your plenty of the one that has the fine flour in it, and put a handful of bran into the other, to make up the weight." " Why, then, high hanging to ye, for sworn rogues," says Jack, altogether forgetting himself in his indignation, " is it *maneing* to serve me——" He was here cut short in his address by a loud screech, and on the instant he received a blow from behind, that, to the best of his conception, must have been inflicted by the trunk of a ten year old holly. He tumbled headlong from the little parapet before the door of the mill, and rolling down the adjoining cliff, plumped with a loud

splash into the deep pool below. When his senses returned, he found himself kicking and plunging on the surface of the water, and an inexpressible weight on his shoulders perpetually tending to sink him. On looking up, what was his horror to see between him and the broad moon that was shining down upon him, old Donald Bawn, sitting upon *his grug*, with his two feet pressed on his chest and collar-bone, and a hand upon each shoulder, endeavouring to keep him down. All around were a set of furious little fellows, aiding him in every possible way—some splashing the water in Jack's face, to suffocate him—some making huge waves—and some watching to cramp his toe or foot, if it chanced to get above the surface; and in this desperate struggle, they all floated down the stream together.

It happened, that night, the good man, Father Dooley, parish priest of Loughill, had a *sick call*, up towards the mountains, and, as luck would have it, he was jogging over the bridge on his old fawn-coloured mare, just at the moment poor Jack-Edy was plunging under the archway below. The fairies, afraid of discovery,

and of the worthy priest's interference, raised a high wind, and a huge cloud of dust, to deafen and blind him as he passed; but such are the ways of Providence, it was to this circumstance alone poor Jack owed his escape. Tired of struggling, unable to rid himself of the vindictive old monster "that was for murdering him intirely," and half suffocated already, from the quantities of water splashed into his mouth whenever he attempted to open it for breath, he at last resigned himself to his fate, and allowed himself to sink quietly. Already the moon-beam was taking its last farewell of his slanting eyebrows, and the yet aspiring tip of his motionless nose, when a loud sneeze was heard above, from Father Dooley—"Chee, chee," and the usual exclamation, "Wisha, God bless us." Instantly a loud scream, ten-fold more terrible than that which had concluded the work in the mill, echoed from the archway. The wind and dust disappeared above, and Jack-Edy arose above the surface of the waters below. Finding himself disengaged from the weight of old Donald, he now put forth his strength again, and, with two or three desperate lunges, found his

foot touching the firm rocks, and without more ado he scrambled out of the bed of the river. Great was Father Dooley's surprise to see a man escaping out of the depth of the waters at that hour of night, and more especially one so proverbial for keeping good hours as little Jack-Edy; but on learning the whole story, he took him, dripping as he was, up behind him, on the fawn-coloured mare, and though it was a *good step* out of his way, *landed* him safe and sound at his own cabin-door, in the village of Ballyhahil.

On another occasion, Jack had been at the fair of Glin, and having met a few friends there, whom he was obliged to treat, he tarried over long, and plodded his way home at night in a somewhat merrier mood than usual. The night was so pitch dark that he took the wrong road; but after travelling for some distance found his mistake, and turned back. He began at length to feel very tired and drowsy, and coming by an old church, eastward of Glin, which was in a dismantled and ruinous state, and now no longer used for the services of religion, he turned in and stretched himself down

underneath the ivied wall, where he had good shelter from the cold north-west wind that had been blowing in his teeth for the last half hour. Hardly had he settled himself *snug and comfortable*, with his great frieze coat wrapped close about him, and his hat pressed down on his head, so as nearly to cover his eyes, when he saw light all about him, and the brass buttons at the knees of his old corduroy shining as bright as the day he bought them, *spick and span new*, at Judy O'Flanagan's shop, in Shanagolden; and all the tombstones were lit up about him, and long white bones stuck up against them here and there, half covered with the tangled grass. Right before, the eyeless sockets of a bleached skull, which some one, out of idleness or mockery, had stuck upon the iron railing of an old vault, seemed to stare from the mid sky upon him. "Why, then, murder an ouns, Jack-Edy, where is it that you've got to?" thought he to himself, "or what will become of you at all this blessed night?" for, when he turned him in for a rest, he never knew 'twas to the *berrin* place he was going.

What seemed very remarkable was, that not

a glimmer of light fell on any thing outside the church-yard wall, and it had something singular even in its own nature, for it was neither like sun-light, nor moon-light, nor the light of the stars, nor fire, nor rush light, nor indeed like any light that Jack had ever before beheld; and now and then he thought he could distinguish shadows passing and re-passing before his eyes, and presently he heard the sound as of bees buzzing above and about him. On looking up, he saw a host of little beings flying about in the air, as if they were looking for some one. "A long life, now, and an asy death to me, instead of the murther that's threatnin," whispered Jack, inwardly, "but it is my own self they're sarching for," and he involuntarily gave a deep sigh. In less than a minute, down popped one of them on his shoulder, and there was a shout that rang through the whole church-yard, "We have him!" "We have him!" "Erah, then, my boohelleen,"* cried the little hunch-backed animal that had fixed himself on his shoulder, "is it here that we have found you at last, and to be hunting you night and day, in wind and in rain, for a good three years, and, moreover,

* Little boy.

to no purpose at all." "Never mind that," says another, "isn't it himself that'll pay for it, maybe 'tis little of the life he'll have in him by this time to-morrow." "That's thrue for you agra," says a third, "they have it in for him, for the trick he played 'em in the mill-stream, and here comes old Donald Bawn himself, that was made such a fool of, when he had him all but smothered in the water," and Donald was heard bustling through the crowd that had gathered round him, exclaiming as he pushed his way. "Smah a boohil Liam, cudth-ene noath a will shea a vehoönig beg, cudth-ene noath a will shea, that's a good boy, Bill, where is the little vagabond, where is he?" and with many other consoling expressions, that made the perspiration run down Jack-Edy's forehead and temples, as he was himself in the habit of expressing it, "faster than the strames that run down the chapel-walls on a Sunday at mass-time;" but he shut his eyes all the time, that they mightn't think 'twas awake he was.

"Come, come, lads, there's no time to be lost," says one of them, who was better dressed than the rest, for Jack sometimes took a peep

between his eye-lashes, "you know we can't have him out of this in his clothes." With that half a dozen of them fell about stripping him; one dragging off his great brogues, another unbuttoning the knees of his corduroy, a third dragging down his Connemara stockings, a fourth ridding him of his frieze coat; till, in a word, he was reduced to shirt and waistcoat; and he making believe all the time that he was fast asleep, though so unmercifully pulled and mauled about. Old Donald himself was now busily engaged in drawing off the waistcoat, which Jack endeavoured, by a thousand sly manoeuvres, to prevent; such as shrugging his shoulder up to his ear, or advancing it forward, or pressing his fore-arm close on his breast; when a little fellow, that was stooping forward to assist Donald, gave a start backward, exclaiming, in the greatest agitation, "a needle, a needle," and true enough in the breast of the waistcoat that hung down on Jack's arm, a huge darning needle was sufficiently evident. There was a general pause for some moments, when the well-dressed fairy who had before given orders for stripping him, stepped forward, and desired them to exa-

mine whether the needle had ever been made use of. It was immediately inspected by those of the greatest skill among them, who one and all as instantly declared, a thread had never been drawn through the eye of it. "Then," said the leader again, "we might as well have staid at home in Knuckfierna to-night, for anything we have to do with Jack-Edy;" and Jack laughing at the same time to be listening to him.

"Erah, is it to let him off so asy as that?" says Donald, "and we all but having him, as I may say. Whuist, I have it. Lave him there, fast asleep as he is, there's an herb grows in the bogs of Tubbermuirra that'll melt the needle out of his coat in no time. I'll pluck a bunch of it, and be back in a jiffey." To this they all whispered assent, and then they arose so softly, and took their way so silently through the air, that their departing forms seemed like vanishing shadows, or clouds rising towards the moon on a midsummer's night. "Eh then, God's blessing on the backs of ye," cried little Jack, as he sprung upon his feet, with a half-chuckle, "they're what I was longing to see this half-hour;" and as if by magic, the way home came

into his mind in an instant, and off he cut without stop or stay, through mud and mire, until he reached his own door. "Arrah Joaneen, Joaneen eroo, open the door, hurry, a colleen dhas, or I'm a dead man, hurry. Granny Keane, agra, Granny Keane, get up and open the door or you'll never see Jack-Edy again. Wisha, murther! if they'll open a door to-night; I'll be caught like Thady Hourigan himself;" and so he continued knocking and calling and swearing, until his little sister Joan threw open the wicker-door to him. He rushed in, and clapt it to in a moment, and placing a spade with the top of the handle in the wicker work, and the steel sunk fast in the earthen floor, made all tolerably secure. Then brushing back his hair, and wiping his forehead with the skirt of his coat, he turned to the little girl who stood shivering and looking down at him, with nothing, save her grandmother's old cloak about her, and a dying rushlight in her hand. "Wissha Joaneen, honey, what's become of the feet-water?" "'Tis there in the keeler," returned little Joan. "Upset it at the door-way agra." "And, Joaneen, what's become of the reapeen-

hook and the wheel?" "The reaper-hook's on the hob, and the wheel's in the corner," said Joaneen; and so while the little girl was pouring out the feet-water, Jack put the reaping-hook in the thatch, and made fast the hand-reel with a rush. "And now," says he, tumbling into bed, "it's odd if I'm not in the wind of old Donald."

His head was scarce well on the pillow, when a thumping was heard at the door, and a loud calling, "Jack-Edy, eroo, Jack-Edy!" 'Twas for all the world the voice of a near neighbour of his, Larry O'Donnel the tailor; but Jack knew very well how that was, and he began to snore aloud. Presently he hears another knocking at the door, and the voice of Darby O'Flanagan the cooper. "Are you awake, Shawn Edy? Open the doore a boohil, 'tis the keg I'm bringing, that you were wanting for the whiskey." "Wisha the dikens carry you, Donald," said Jack to himself, never making an answer all the while, but only snoring the louder.

Darby soon got tired of the knocking, but he wasn't long gone when a whining began under the little window, like that of a young

child, and sometimes it died away, and he heard as it were the low *huxhoing* of the mother, and then it came to blow and rain, and there was tapping at the casement. "Who's that there?" says Granny Keane, raising up her head. "The widow's blessing on you and yours, granny," said a piteous voice outside, "and give a poor woman and her child shelter from this bad night." "Stay where you are, mother," whispered Jack-Edy, "'t isn't herself that's there at all, as good right I have to know, in regard of what has happened me this night;" and so they both lay quiet in the bed, till at length the woman and her child went away.

The wind and the rain had just subsided, and all was calm again, when Jack heard the same buzzing sound at the wicker-door, as he had heard in the church-yard, and presently the voice of old Donald in a low tone saying, "Feetwater, Feetwater, get up and let me in." "I'm under your feet here at the doorway," returned the Feetwater, "and how can I let you in?" "Reapenhook, Reapenhook," said Donald Bawn, again, "come to the door and let me in." "My nose is fast in the thatch," replied the

Reapenhook, "and how can I let you in?" "Handreel, Handreel," said Donald, a third time, "come here and let me in." "I'm tied fast with a rush," said the Handreel, "and how can I let you in?" "E'then, bad look to you, Jack-Edy," roared out Donald at last, "there's no one from this to Dingle fit to hould a candle to you any way;" and giving the door a kick that almost knocked the spade from behind it, he departed, never troubling little Jack at home or abroad, or late or early, from that hour to this.*

* The fest-water, reaping-hook, and hand-reel, are, from some cause which I have not traced to its origin, supposed to be treacherously-minded inmates in a cottage, and are in consequence looked to with a peculiar jealousy by Irish housewives. Perhaps the superstition was first suggested by some enemy to domestic negligence. The precautions adopted by our pigmy hero are seldom omitted at bed-time.



THE UNBURIED LEGS.

I know not how the truth may be,
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

Scott.



THE UNBURIED LEGS.

IN the cool grey of a fine Sunday morning in the month of June, Shoresha Hewer,* dressed out in a new *shoot* of clothes, and with a pair of runner leather brogues that had never been on the foot of man before, set out from his father's little cabin, romantically situated amidst a little group of elder and ash trees, on the banks of the river Flesk, to overtake an early mass in the village of Abbeydorney. Such, at least, to the old couple, was represented as the ostensible object of Shoresha's long walk, though they did not fail to hint to one another, with half-suppressed smiles, as he closed the door after him, that his views were not altogether limited to that sacred ceremony. What was really uppermost in his thoughts on that auspicious morning, as he

* George Howard.

brushed along with a light and springing step over heather or tussock—whether the chapel, where he was to kneel by the side of a little blue-eyed, fair-haired devotee, during the service, and the long and digressive exhortation; or the barn at Abbeydorney cross, where he was to commence the evening dance with her, it would be invidious to scrutinize, and was especially of little consequence on this occasion, as both his love and his devotion fell prostrate before a master-feeling which suddenly usurped an absolute command over the events of the day.

As he was trudging along a low monotonous heath-covered country, whistling the old air of *Thau me en a hulla agus na dhusig me*,* he came to a high double ditch, covered with black-thorn bushes, with here and there the decaying trunk of an old oak or beech, throwing forth a few weakly shoots, which still waved their slender boughs in the wind, as if almost in mimicry of the mighty arms it once stretched forth over the fields. He looked along the bank, and observing a spot where the ascent was likely to

* I am asleep, and don't wake me.

prove easy, caught hold of a branch to assist him in mounting, when he heard a noise at the other side, and a rustling among the bushes, as if some one was making his way through; he got his foot, however, on a tuft of rushes in the ditch side to proceed, when suddenly with a loud exclamation he tumbled backward into the field; for what should he see walking upon the top of the ditch, and just preparing to jump down, but two well-shaped, middle-sized legs, without either hip, body, or head. It was just as if they had been cut off a little above the knee, and though there was nothing to connect or regulate their movements, they climbed, jumped, and progressed along the moor, in as well adjusted steps, as if the first dancing-master of the county of Kerry had been superintending their movements. They evidently belonged to a man, as appeared not only from their figure and size, but from the portion of the white kerseymere garment which buckled at the knee, over a neat silk stocking. The shoes were square-toed, of Spanish leather, and were ornamented with old-fashioned silver buckles, such as had not been used in that part of the country for some gene-

rations. They had slowly paced by Shoresha, and already left him staring behind, at the distance of a good stone-throw, before he recovered from his astonishment sufficiently to think of rising, which he accomplished slowly, and almost involuntarily, never taking his eyes off the legs, but ejaculating to himself, "Blessed mother in heaven! is it awake or drameing I am?" They had now got on so far, that he perceived they would be soon out of sight, if he did not move in pursuit; so abandoning Abbeydorney and its inducements, he, without hesitation, adopted that resolution.

It would be vain to detail all the ohs! the Dhar a dieus! the monoms! that escaped from Shoresha, time after time, as the legs hopped over a trench, picked their steps through a patch of bog, or pushed through a thicket. He was before long joined by a neighbour who was on his way to Listowel, for the priest to christen his child, but who could not resist the temptation of following and ascertaining how this extraordinary phenomenon should end. A smith, and a little boy who had been despatched to fetch him from the cross-road by a traveller to get

a few nails driven into a loosened shoe, soon after fell in with them. A milk-maid laid down her can and spancill, and some ragged gorçons gave over their early game of goal, as they came up, and so great were the numbers collected when they approached Listowel, even at that dewy hour of the morning, that it seemed like the congregation of some little village chapel moving along at prayer time.

It was amusing enough, when they arrived at the waters of the Flesk, to observe with what delicacy and elegance the legs tripped over it, from stepping stone to stepping stone, without getting spot or speck on the beautiful silk stockings. They now cut across the country at a nimble gait, the procession behind lengthening every hour, and increasing in clamorous exclamations of wonder as it proceeded.

After some hard walking, they descended into a wooded glen, where the tangled underwood, and wild briar, and close and stooping branches of the older timber, rendered it no pleasant travelling to such as were under the heavy disadvantage of a superincumbent body. To the subjects of our narrative, which were annoyed

by no such lumber, of course no difficulties presented themselves; they hopped over the dense brushwood, or ducked under the branchy arms of oak or elm stretched across the path, with equal activity, while the most eager of the crowd behind were eternally knocking their foreheads and noses against some unobserved bough, or dragging their tattered clothes through black-thorn and briar: several, wearied and fretted with the chase, soon fell behind, while others, seeing no probability of any immediate termination to it, and altogether ignorant to what it might lead, gave up in apprehension. A thousand surmises about it were already afloat; some saying, they saw them going to stop once or twice, and that they certainly would not go much farther; others swearing out, that "'twas faster and faster they were walking every moment, and that the dickens a one of 'em would stop or stay until they got to the banks of the Shannon." Many suggested that it wasn't they at all that were there, but only, as it were, the shapes of 'em; and that they'd keep going, going, ever, until it was night, and lead 'em all into some wood or desert place; and then, may-be,

the ground to open beneath 'em, or a gust of wind to come by and sweep 'em away in one *gust*, so that they'd never be heard of after. The legs had, meantime, crossed a shallow part of the river Gale, that stole noiselessly through the bottom of the glen, and pressed on with renewed vigour at the opposite side. A flat, moorish, uninteresting looking country, fell fast behind them; and, as they invariably pursued the most direct route to Farbert, the tired followers, which now consisted chiefly of boys and young men, began in good earnest to suspect that town to be their real destination. They were, however, soon relieved from these disagreeable anticipations, when the legs arrived opposite a place called Newtownsands, made a sudden stop; wheeled the toes round to the right, and almost instantly sprang across a little trench; they then advanced rapidly towards the remains of an old church, which are still to be seen there, within one or two fields of the road. There are but three roofless walls now standing; and close to where the west gable formerly stood, is one solitary tree, which, in that unwooded and almost uninhabited region, only

adds to the universal loneliness. There are a few graves about, but even these are only observable on a very close approach, so buried are they in the long rank grass and weeds, and in the fallen rubbish of the building. To one of these, which lay close to the south wall, our heroes moved on, but at a more measured, and it would seem, reverential pace than before; and kneeling slowly down beside it, remained in that position before the wondering eyes of the few who had persevered in the pursuit, and had now, one after another, come up. As their courage grew in contemplating the pacific and holy attitude of the legs, they began gradually to contract their circle, and creep nearer and nearer; but the closer they approached, the more shadowy did the objects become, until the resemblance was only to be distinguished by a fleecy, almost transparent outline, which moment after moment was less defined, and at last melted away into thin air.

Such was the story that occupied the thoughts and tongues of all the gossips from Newtownsands to Abbeydorney, for months and years after. As the occurrence was in itself quite

unique in its kind, even those who pretended to the most intimate communication with the spiritual world, as well as the confessed and best accredited agents of the *gentlemen*, were wholly unable to offer any thing like a probable explanation of it. One old blind woman, who was, indeed, the Lord knows how old, and was wrinkled and grey in the memory of the baldest inhabitant of Abbeydorney, called to mind a tale that had been told her when a child, which perhaps may be said to give some clue to it.

"There lived," she said, "in former times, a lady of immense wealth, who had a strong castle not far from Abbeydorney, though no one could now tell where; and two great lords came to propose for her: one a fair-haired, blue-eyed youth, of a delicate make and graceful manner; the other a dark, stout, athletic figure, but proud and uncourtly. The lady liked the fair lad best, which made the other so jealous of him, that he was determined, one way or another, to compass his death. So he engaged a fellow, by a large sum of money, to get access to his bed-room at night, and cut off his head with a hatchet. On the night the murder was to be committed, he

made the lad, who never suspected him, drink more wine than usual after dinner, that he might be wholly incapable of resistance. In this state he retired to his room, where he threw himself on the bed without undressing, and, as it awkwardly enough happened, with his head towards the bed's feet. In a few minutes, in came the fellow with the hatchet, and struck a blow that he thought must have severed the head from the body, but it was the two legs he had cut off. Upon this the young lord groaned, and immediately after received another blow, which killed him. The corpse was put into a sack, and carried that night to Newtownsands, where it got Christian burial; but the legs were thrown into a hole in the castle garden, and covered up with earth. The lord who had procured the murder, the next day pretended to the lady that the blue-eyed lad had returned home; upon which, not knowing the deceit, she became quite offended, and in a few weeks after agreed to marry his rival. But in the midst of the joy and feasting on the bridal night, there was a horn blown outside the castle, and soon after, steps were heard ascending the grand staircase, and the

doors of the bridal-hall flew open, and in walked two bodyless legs. Then there was screaming, and running, and the bride fainted; but the legs followed the bridegroom about every where, until he quitted the castle; and it was said, that wherever he looked or turned to, from that hour, he saw them stalking before, or beside, or behind him, until he wasted and fell into a decay. And when he was dying he confessed the whole, and desired the assassin might be searched for every where, to ascertain from him where the legs were thrown, that they might be dug up, and get Christian burial; but the villain was never found from that day to this, and, may be," continued the old woman, "the legs are in punishment this way, and get leave to walk the country of an odd time, to shew what's happening to them, and make some good soul search them out, and have them removed to Newtown-sands."

OWNEY AND OWNEY-NA- PEAK.

Aye, marry, sir, there's mettle in this young fellow ;
What a sheep's look his elder brother has !

FLETCHER's Elder Brother.



OWNEY AND OWNEY-NA- PEAK.

WHEN Ireland had kings of her own—when there was no such thing as a coat made of red cloth in the country—when there was plenty in men's houses, and peace and quietness at men's doors (and that is a long time since)—there lived, in a village not far from the great city of Lumneach,* two young men, cousins: one of them named Owney, a smart, kind-hearted, handsome youth, with limbs of a delicate form, and a very good understanding. His cousin's name was Owney, too, but the neighbours christened him Owney-na-peak (Owney of the nose), on account of a long nose he had got—a thing so out of all proportion, that after looking at

* The present Limerick.

one side of his face, it was a smart morning's walk to get round the nose and take a view the other (at least, so the people used to say). He was a stout, able-bodied fellow, as sturdy as a beaten hound, and he was, moreover, a cruel tyrant to his young cousin, with whom he lived in a kind of partnership.

Both these men were of an humble station. They were smiths—white-smiths—and they got a good deal of business to do from the lords of the court, and the knights, and all the grand people of the city. But one day young Owney was in town, he saw a great procession of lords and ladies, and generals, and great people, among whom was the king's daughter of the court—and surely it is not possible for the young rose itself to be so beautiful as she was. His heart fainted at her sight, and he went home desperately in love, and not at all disposed to business.

Money, he was told, was the surest way of getting acquainted with the king, and so he began saving until he had put together a few hogs,* but Owney-na-Peak finding where he

* A hog, 1s. 1d.

had hid them, seized on the whole, as he used to do on all young Owney's earnings.

One evening young Owney's mother found herself about to die, so she called her son to her bed-side, and said to him, "You have been a most dutiful good son, and 'tis proper you should be rewarded for it. Take this china cup to the fair—there is a fairy gift upon it—use your own wit—look about you, and let the highest bidder have it—and so, my white-headed boy, God bless you!"

The young man drew the little bed-curtain down over his dead mother, and in a few days after, with a heavy heart, he took his china cup, and set off to the fair of Garryowen.

The place was merry enough. The field that is called Gallows-green now, was covered with tents. There was plenty of wine (poteen not being known in these days, let alone *parliament*)—a great many handsome girls—and 'tis unknown all the *keoh* that was with the boys and themselves. Poor Owney walked all day through the fair, wishing to try his luck, but ashamed to offer his china cup among all the fine things that were there for sale. Evening was drawing

on at last, and he was thinking of going home, when a strange man tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "My good youth, I have been marking you through the fair the whole day, going about with that cup in your hand, speaking to nobody, and looking as if you would be wanting something or another."

"I'm for selling it," said Oowney.

"What is it you're for selling, you say?" said a second man, coming up, and looking at the cup.

"Why, then," said the first man, "and what's that to you, for a prying meddler, what do you want to know is it he's for selling?"

"Bad manners to you (and where's the use of my wishing you what you have already?) haven't I a right to ask the price of what's in the fair?"

"E'then, the knowledge o' the price is all you'll have for it," says the first. "Here, my lad, is a golden piece for your cup."

"That cup shall never hold drink or diet in your house, please heaven," says the second, "here's two gold pieces for the cup, lad."

"Why, then, see this now—if I was forced

to fill it to the rim with gold before I could call it mine, you shall never hold that cup between your fingers. Here, boy, do you mind me, give me that, once for all, and here's ten gold pieces for it, and say no more."

"Ten gold pieces for a china cup!" said a great lord of the court, that just rode up at that minute, "it must surely be a valuable article. Here, boy, here's twenty pieces for it, and give it to my servant."

"Give it to mine," cried another lord, of the party, "and here's my purse, where you will find ten more. And if any man offers another fraction for it to outbid that, I'll spit him on my sword like a snipe."

"I outbid him," said a fair young lady in a veil, by his side, flinging twenty golden pieces more on the ground.

There was no voice to outbid the lady, and young Owney, kneeling, gave the cup into her hands.

"Fifty gold pieces for a china cup!" said Owney to himself, as he plodded on home, "that was not worth two! Ah! mother, you knew that vanity had an open hand."

But, as he drew near home, he determined to hide his money somewhere, knowing, as he well did, that his cousin would not leave him a single cross to bless himself with. So he dug a little pit, and buried all but two pieces, which he brought to the house. His cousin, knowing the business on which he had gone, laughed heartily when he saw him enter, and asked him what luck he had got with his punch-bowl?

"Not so bad, neither," says Owney. "Two pieces of gold is not a bad price for an article of old china."

"Two gold pieces, Owney, honey! erra, let us see 'em, may be you would?" He took the cash from Owney's hand, and after opening his eyes in great astonishment at the sight of so much money, he put them into his pocket.

"Well, Owney, I'll keep them safe for you, in my pocket within. But tell us, may be you would, how come you to get such a *mort* o' money for an old cup o' painted chaney, that wasn't worth, may be, a fl'penny bit?"

"To get into the heart o' the fair, then, free and easy, and to look about me, and to cry old china; and the first man that *come* up, he to

ask me what is it I'd be asking for the cup, and I to say out bold, ' A hundred pieces of gold ;' and he to laugh hearty, and we to huxter together till he beat me down to two, and there's the whole way of it all."

Owney-na-peak made as if he took no note of this, but next morning early he took an old china saucer himself had in his cupboard, and off he set, without saying a word to any body, to the fair. You may easily imagine that it created no small surprise in the place, when they heard a great big fellow, with a china saucer in his hand, crying out, " A raal *chaney* saucer going for a hundred pieces of goold ! raal chaney—who'll be buying ?"

" Erra, what's that you're saying, you great gomeril ?" says a man, coming up to him, and looking first at the saucer, and then in his face. " Is it thinking any body would go make a *mutaun* of himself to give the like for that saucer ?" But Owney-na-peak had no answer to make, only to cry out, " Raal chaney ! one hundred pieces of goold !"

A crowd soon collected about him, and find-

ing he would give no account of himself, they all fell upon him, beat him within an inch of his life, and after having satisfied themselves upon him, they went their way laughing and shouting. Towards sun-set he got up, and crawled home as well as he could, without cup or money. As soon as Owney saw him, he helped him into the forge, looking very mournful, although, if the truth must be told, it was to revenge himself for former good deeds of his cousin, that he set him about this foolish business.

"Come here, Owney, eroo," said his cousin, after he had fastened the forge door, and heated two irons in the fire. "You child of mischief!" said he, when he had caught him, "you shall never see the fruits of your roguery again, for I will put out your eyes." And so saying, he snatched one of the red hot irons from the fire.

It was all in vain for poor Owney to throw himself on his knees, and ask mercy, and beg and implore forgiveness—he was weak, and Owney-na-peak was strong—he held him fast, and burned out both his eyes. Then taking him, while he was yet fainting from pain, upon his

back, he carried him off to the bleak hill of Knuckpatrick,* a great distance, and there laid him under a tombstone, and went his ways. In a little time after, Owey came to himself.

“O sweet light of day! what is to become of me now?” thought the poor lad, as he lay on his back under the tomb, “is this to be the fruit of that unhappy present? Must I be dark for ever and ever? and am I never more to look upon that sweet countenance, that even in my blindness is not entirely shut out from me?” He would have said a great deal more in this way, and perhaps more pathetic still, but just then he heard a great mewling, as if all the cats in the world were coming up the hill together in one faction. He gathered himself up, and drew back under the stone, and remained quite still, expecting what would come next. In a very short time he heard all the cats purring and mewling about the yard, whisking over the tombstones, and playing all sorts of pranks among the graves. He felt the tails of one or two brush

- * A hill in the west of the county of Limerick, on the summit of which are the ruins of an old church, with a burying-ground still in use. The situation is exceedingly singular and bleak.

his nose, and well for him it was that they did not discover him there, as he afterwards found. At last—

“Silence!” said one of the cats, and they were all as mute as so many mice in an instant. “Now all you cats of this great county, small and large, grey, red, yellow, black, brown, mottled, and white, attend to what I am going to tell you in the name of your king, and the master of all the cats. The sun is down, and the moon is up, and the night is silent, and no mortal hears us, and I may tell you a secret. You know the king of Munster’s daughter?”

“O yes, to be sure, and why wouldn’t we? Go on with your story,” said all the cats together..

“I have heard of her for one,” said a little dirty faced black cat, speaking after they had all done, “for I’m the cat that sits upon the hob of Owney and Owney-na-Peak, the white-smiths, and I know many’s the time young Owney does be talking of her, when he sits by the fire alone, rubbing me down, and planning how he can get into her father’s court.”

“Whist! you natural!” says the cat that

was making the speech, "what do you think we care for your Owney, or Owney-na-Peak?"

"Murther, murther!" thinks Owney to himself, "did any body ever hear the aigual of this?"

"Well, gentlemen," says the cat again, "what I have to say is this. The king was last week struck with blindness, and you all know well, how and by what means any blindness may be cured. You know there is no disorder that can ail mortal frame, that may not be removed by paying a round at the well of Barrygowen* yonder, and the king's disorder is such, that no other cure whatever can be had for it. Now beware, don't let the secret pass one o' ye'r lips, for there's a great grandson of Simon Magus, that is coming down to try his skill, and he it is that must use the water, and marry the princess, who is to be given to any one so fortunate as to heal her father's eyes; and on that day, gentlemen, we are all promised a feast of the fattest

* The superstitious practice of paying rounds, with the view of healing diseases, at Barrygowen well, in the county of Limerick, is still continued, notwithstanding the exertions of the neighbouring Catholic priesthood, which have diminished, but not abolished it.

mice that ever walked the ground." This speech was wonderfully applauded by all the cats, and presently after the whole crew scampered off, jumping, and mewling, and purring, down the hill.

Owney, being sensible that they were all gone, came from his hiding place, and knowing the road to Barrygowen well, he set off, and groped his way out, and shortly knew, by the roaring of the waves, * rolling in from the point of Foynes, that he was near the place. He got to the well, and making a round like a good Christian, he rubbed his eyes with the well-water, and, looking up, saw day dawning in the east. Giving thanks, he jumped up on his feet, and you may say that Owney-na-Peak was much astonished on opening the door of the forge to find him there, his eyes as well or better than ever, and his face as merry as a dance.

"Well, cousin," said Owney, smiling, "you have done me the greatest service that one man can do another, you put me in the way of getting two pieces of gold," said he, showing two

* Of the Shannon.

he had taken from his hiding place. "If you could only bear the pain of suffering me just to put out your eyes, and lay you in the same place as you laid me, who knows what luck you'd have?"

"No, there's no occasion for putting out eyes at all, but could not you lay me, just as I am, to-night, in that place, and let me try my own fortune, if it be a thing you tell truth, and what else could put the eyes in your head, after I burning them out with the irons?"

"You'll know all that in time," says Owney, stopping him in his speech, "for just at that minute, casting his eye towards the hob, he saw the cat sitting upon it, and looking very hard at him. So he made a sign to Owney-na-Peak to be silent, or talk of something else; at which the cat turned away her eyes, and began washing her face, quite simple, with her two paws, looking now and then sideways into Owney's face, just like a Christian. By and by, when she had walked out of the forge, he shut the door after her, and finished what he was going to say, which made Owney-na-Peak still more anxious than before to be placed under

the tombstone. Owey agreed to it very readily, and, just as they were done speaking, cast a glance towards the forge window, where he saw the imp of a cat, just with her nose and one eye peeping in through a broken pane. He said nothing, however, but prepared to carry his cousin to the place; where, towards night-fall, he laid him as he had been laid himself, snug under the tombstone, and went his way down the hill, resting in Shanagolden that night, to see what would come of it in the morning.

Owey-na-Peak had not been more than two or three hours or so, lying down, when he heard the very same noises coming up the hill, that had puzzled Owey the night before. Seeing the cats enter the church-yard, he began to grow very uneasy, and strove to hide himself as well as he could, which was tolerably well too, all being covered by the tombstone, excepting part of the nose, which was so long that he could not get it to fit by any means. You may say to yourself, that he was not a little surprised, when he saw the cats all assemble like a congregation going to hear mass, some sitting, some walking about, and asking one another

after the kittens and the like, and more of them stretching themselves upon the tombstones, and waiting the speech of their commander.

Silence was proclaimed at length, and he spoke: "Now all you cats of this great county, small and large, grey, red, yellow, black, brown, mottled, or white, attend—"

"Stay! stay!" said a little cat with a dirty face, that just then came running into the yard. "Be silent, for there are mortal ears listening to what you say. I have run hard and fast to say, that our words were overheard last night. I am the cat that sits upon the hob of Owney and Owney-na-Peak, and I saw a bottle of the water of Barrygowen hanging up over the chimbley this morning in their house."

In an instant all the cats began screaming, and mewling, and flying, as if they were mad, about the yard, searching every corner, and peeping under every tombstone. Poor Owney-na-Peak endeavoured as well as he could to hide himself from them, and began to thump his breast, and cross himself, but it was all in vain, for one of the cats saw the long nose

peeping from under the stone, and in a minute they dragged him, roaring and bawling, into the very middle of the church-yard, where they flew upon him all together, and made *smithereens* of him, from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet.

The next morning very early, young Owey came to the church-yard, to see what had become of his cousin. He called over and over again upon his name, but there was no answer given. At last, entering the place of tombs, he found his limbs scattered over the earth.

"So that is the way with you, is it?" said he, clasping his hands, and looking down on the bloody fragments, "why then, though you were no great things in the way of kindness to me, when your bones were together, that isn't the reason why I'd be glad to see them torn asunder this morning, early." So gathering up all the pieces that he could find, he put them into a bag he had with him, and away with him to the well of Barrygowen, where he lost no time in making a round, and throwing them in, all in a heap. In an instant, he saw Owey-na-

Peak as well as ever, scrambling out of the well, and helping him to get up, he asked him how he felt himself?

"Oh! is it how I'd feel myself you'd want to know," said the other, "easy and I'll tell you. Take that for a specimint!" giving him at the same time a blow on the head, which you may say wasn't long in laying Owney sprawling on the ground. Then without giving him a minute's time to recover, he thrust him into the very bag from which he had been just shook himself, resolving within himself to drown him in the Shannon at once, and put an end to him for ever.

Growing weary by the way, he stopped at a shebeen-house *overright* Robertstown Castle, to refresh himself with a *morning*, before he'd go any further. Poor Owney did not know what to do when he came to himself, if it might be rightly called coming to himself, and the great bag tied up about him. His wicked cousin shot him down behind the door in the kitchen, and telling him he'd have his life surely if he stirred, he walked in to take something that's good in the little parlour.

Owney could not for the life of him avoid cutting a hole in the bag, to have a peep about the kitchen, and see whether he had no means of escape. He could see only one person, a simple looking man, that was counting his beads in the chimney-corner, and now and then striking his breast, and looking up as if he was praying greatly.

"Lord," says he, "only give me death, death, and a favourable judgment! I haven't any body now to look after, nor any body to look after me. What's a few tinpennies to save a man from want? Only a quiet grave is all I ask."

"Murther, murther!" says Owney to himself, "here's a man wants death and can't have it, and here am I going to have it, and, in troth, I don't want it at all, see." So, after thinking a little what he had best do, he began to sing out very merrily, but lowering his voice, for fear he should be heard in the next room :

" To him that tied me here,
Be thanks and praises given !
I'll bless him night and day,
For packing me to Heaven.

Of all the roads you'll name,
He surely will not lag,
Who takes his way to heaven,
By travelling in a bag!"

"To heaven, *ershishin*?"* said the man in the chimney-corner, opening his mouth and his eyes, "why then, you'd be doing a Christian turn, if you'd take a neighbour with you, that's tired of this bad and villanous world."

"You're a fool, you're a fool!" said Owney.

"I know I am; at least so the neighbours always tell me—but what hurt? May-be I have a Christian soul as well as another; and fool or no fool, in a bag, or out of a bag, I'd be glad and happy to go the same road it is you are talking of."

After seeming to make a great favour of it, in order to allure him the more to the bargain, Owney agreed to put him into the bag instead of himself; and cautioning him against saying a word, he was just going to tie him, when he was touched with a little remorse for going to have the innocent man's life taken: and seeing a slip of a pig that was killed the day before, in

* Does he say?

a corner, hanging up, the thought struck him that it would do just as well to put it in the bag in their place. No sooner said than done, to the great surprise of the natural, he popped the pig into the bag, and tied it up.

“Now,” says he, “my good friend, go home, say nothing, but bless the name in heaven for saving your life; and you were as near losing it this morning, as ever man was that didn’t, now.”

They left the house together. Presently out comes Owney-na-Peak, very hearty; and being so, he was not able to perceive the difference in the contents of the bag, but hoisting it upon his back, he sallied out of the house. Before he had gone far, he came to the rock of Foynes, from the top of which he flung his burthen into the salt waters.

Away he went home, and knocked at the door of the forge, which was opened to him by Owney. You may fancy him to yourself crossing and blessing himself over and over again, when he saw, as he thought, the ghost standing before him. But Owney looked very merry, and told him not to be afraid. “You did many is the good turn in your life,” says he, “but the equal

of this never." So he up and told him that he found the finest place in the world at the bottom of the waters, and plenty of money; see these four pieces for a specimen," showing him some he had taken from his own hiding hole, "what do you think of that for a story?"

"Why then, that it's a droll one, no less; sorrow bit av I wouldn't have a mind to try my luck in the same way; how did you come home here before me that took the straight road, and didn't stop for so much as my *gusthak** since I left Knockpatrick?"

"Oh, there's a short cut under the waters," said Owey. "Mind, and only be eivil while you're in Thierna-oge, and you'll make a sight o' money."

Well became Owey, he thrust his cousin into the bag, tied it about him, and putting it into a car that was returning after leaving a load of oats at a corn-store in the city, it was not long before he was at Foynes again. Here he dismounted, and going to the rock, he was, I am afraid, half inclined to start his burthen into the wide water, when he saw a small skiff making

* Literally—walk in.

towards the point. He hailed her, and learned that she was about to board a great vessel from foreign parts, that was sailing out of the river. So he went with his bag on board, and making his bargain with the captain of the ship, he left Owney-na-Peak along with the crew, and never was troubled with him after, from that day to this.

As he was passing by Barrygowen well, he filled a bottle with the water ; and going home, he bought a fine suit of clothes with the rest of the money he had buried, and away he set off in the morning to the city of Lumneach. He walked through the town, admiring every thing he saw, until he came before the palace of the king. Over the gates of this he saw a number of spikes, with a head of a man stuck upon each, grinning in the sunshine.

Not at all daunted, he knocked very boldly at the gate, which was opened by one of the guards of the palace. " Well! who are you, friend ?"

" I am a great doctor that's come from foreign parts to cure the king's eye-sight. Lead me to his presence this minute."

" Fair and softly," said the soldier—" Do you

see all those heads that are stuck up there? Your's is very likely to be keeping company by them, if you are so foolish as to come inside those walls. They are the heads of all the doctors in the land that came before you; and that's what makes the town so fine and healthy this time past, praised be heaven for the same!"

"Don't be talking, you great gomeril," says Owney, "only bring me to the king at once."

He was brought before the king. After being warned of his fate if he should fail to do all that he undertook, the place was made clear of all but a few guards, and Owney was informed once more, that if he should restore the king's eyes, he should wed with the princess; and have the crown after her father's death. This put him in great spirits, and after making a round upon his bare knees about the bottle, he took a little of the water, and rubbed it into the king's eyes. In a minute he jumped up from his throne, and looked about him as well as ever. He ordered Owney to be dressed out like a king's son, and sent word to his daughter that she should receive him that instant for her husband.

You may say to yourself that the princess, glad as she was of her father's recovery, did not like this message : small blame to her, when it is considered that she had never set her eyes upon the man himself. However, her mind was changed wonderfully when he was brought before her, covered with gold and diamonds, and all sort of grand things. Wishing, however, to know whether he had as good a wit as he had a person, she told him that he should give her on the next morning, an answer to two questions, otherwise she would not hold him worthy of her hand. Owney bowed, and she put the questions as follows :

“ What is that which is the sweetest thing in the world ? ”

“ What are the three most beautiful objects in the creation ? ”

These were puzzling questions ; but Owney, having a small share of brains of his own, was not long in forming an opinion upon the matter. He was very impatient for the morning ; but it came just as slow and regular as if he were not in the world. In a short time he was summoned to the court-yard, where all the nobles of the

land were assembled, with flags waving, and trumpets sounding, and all manner of glorious doings going on. The princess was placed on a throne of gold near her father; and there was a beautiful carpet spread for Owney to stand upon, while he answered her questions. After the trumpets were silenced, she put the first, with a clear sweet voice, and he replied:

“It’s salt!” says he, very stout, out.

There was great applause at the answer; and the princess owned, smiling, that he had judged right. “But now,” said she, “for the second. What are the three most beautiful things in the creation?”

“Why,” answered the young man, “here they are. A ship in full sail—a field of wheat in ear—and——”

What the third most beautiful thing was, all the people didn’t hear; but there was great blushing and laughing among the ladies, and the princess smiled, and nodded at him, quite pleased with his wit. Indeed, many said that the judges of the land themselves could not have answered better, had they been in Owney’s place; nor could there be any where found a more likely or well-spoken young man. He

was brought first to the king, who took him in his arms, and presented him to the princess. She could not help acknowledging to herself that his understanding was quite worthy of his handsome person. Orders being immediately given for the marriage to proceed, they were made one with all speed; and it is said, that before another year came round, the fair princess was one of the most beautiful objects in the creation.

CONCLUSION.

By the time this last tale had drawn to its catastrophe, the narrator (the toothless hag before alluded to) found that she had been for a considerable time the sole admirer of her own romance. Alarmed by the increasing strength and harmony of the chorus with which the sleepers bore burthen to her tale, she raised her palsied head from beneath the covering she had drawn over it, and gazed upon the circle. The host and hostess sat upright in their lofty chairs, snoring as if it had been for a wager, at the same time that they maintained their attitudes with an unbending dignity that would have

struck Cineas mute, while their friends lay scattered about the room in all directions ; and some in very queer, comical postures indeed. As it was the tale, beyond all question, which had set them to sleep, so the cessation of the drowsy hum of the old woman's voice produced the contrary effect. The moment that perfect silence reigned around them, all rubbed their eyes, and woke. The first grey shimmer of a winter dawn stole in upon the revellers—the fowls began to ruffle their feathers upon the roost over the door—and the swinish citizens of a neighbouring piggery gave grunting salutation to the morn.

With hurried and wondering gestures, the guests entered upon the bustle of separation, and the coast was presently left clear of all but the good folks of the house, and their guest, the chronicler of the evening.

Of late years, scenes like this have become rare in Ireland. Before the period of the year arrives, when ancient and revered custom reminds the peasant of the domestic jollities of his fathers, and of his own childhood, the horn of the Whiteboy, or the yell of the more ferocious Rockite, has startled the keepers of the land,

and warned the inhabitants to prepare for "other than dancing measures." Without presuming, for an instant, to venture an opinion on the causes of the change, we may, at least, calculate on the reader's sympathy in expressing a hope that it may be of brief continuance; and that the time may not be very distant, when the Irish agriculturist may enjoy the domestic comforts which at many periods were known to his progenitors, and which are not denied to other nations in our own day—when

" every man shall eat in safety
Under his own *hedge*, what he plants; and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours ;"

when he can have his pit of potatoes, his reek of turf, his Sunday coat and brogues, his "three tinpennies" for the priest at Christmas and Easter; and his family fireside, and his collection of "popular tales" at "Holland-tide."

THE END.

